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February 2001 ■ Issue 04

Video Gamer

All the games
All the news
All the tips

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PLAYSTATION

SMACKED DOWN!

Smackdown! 2 smashed – four
big pages of face-breaking tips!



PLAYSTATION/PS2

FIFA 2001

New tactics! Never lose again
with our football masterclass!

PC

COCKNEY KILLERS

Extra-terrestrial Londoners battle
it out in PC space ace *Giants*.

NEWS

DON'T MOVE. DON'T SPEAK. DON'T BREATHE.

Metal Gear Solid 2: the PS2
game that will change the world.

DREAMCAST

WHOOSH!

Daytona USA 2001: the fastest
thing on four wheels revealed!

ALL THE DETAILS INSIDE!

XBOX

WE TOLD YOU HOW IT LOOKS
– NOW SEE FOR YOURSELF!



WIN!

A SONY AIBO
ROBOT DOG WORTH
£1600

p66

FINAL FANTASY 9

SWORDS, SORCERY AND SAVING THE GIRL
IN THE PLAYSTATION **GAME OF THE YEAR**

38 PAGES OF
REVIEWS!

INSIDE! 31 GAMES TIPPED!

Dead or Alive 2 (PS2) and Quake
III (DC) crushed – finish 'em both!

- Donald Duck (PS2)
- Oni (PC)
- Severance (PC)
- Harvest Moon (PS)
- X-Games (PS2)
- Blair Witch (PC)



FEBRUARY 2001

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02



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Media with passion

INSIDE EVERY FOOTBALL FAN
THERE'S A MANAGER
SCREAMING TO GET OUT.

"MORE STATS, TEAMS, AND PLAYERS THAN THE BECKHAMS HAVE CLOTHES." - Official UK PlayStation Magazine



OUT FEB 2001

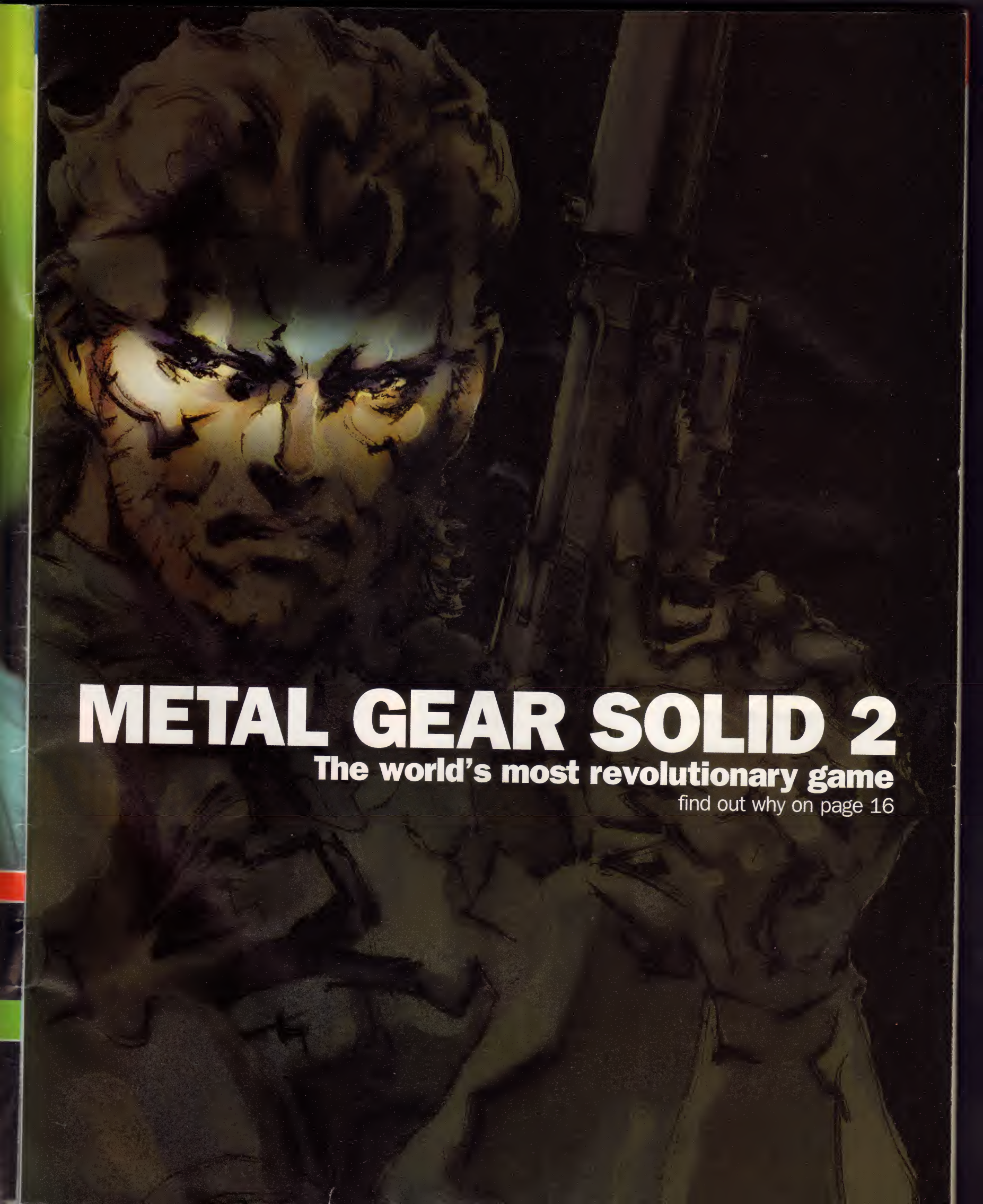
THE NO.1 BEST SELLING FOOTBALL MANAGEMENT GAME IS BACK ON THE PARK.



Can you get your head round football management? Can you pick the right tactics, get the training spot on, have your scouts looking at the right players and make sure that ticket prices are bringing in enough cash? Then come and have a go, if you think you're smart enough. Now with 2001 English and Scottish Leagues. LMA Manager 2001 is also PS2 compatible.

Codemasters®

GENIUS AT PLAY™



METAL GEAR SOLID 2

The world's most revolutionary game

find out why on page 16

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The games scene traditionally slows down after Christmas, but this year it's been the absolute polar opposite. January and February has seen some of the hottest announcements

of any year in living memory, not least the long awaited confirmation of what Xbox looks like. (What do you think of it? Slick black power box, or retro hi-fi unit circa 1982? E-mail us at vgn@futurenet.co.uk and let us know!)

Interestingly, though, while Microsoft have been revelling in the spotlight, Sony have been finding it tough: with their PS2 now on general sale (we've seen it on the shelves in HMV, MVC and Virgin), there's an unexpected dearth of games. In fact, between now and the delayed *Gran Turismo 3* (out in late May), only *Moto GP* and next month's *Unreal Tournament* can possibly be classed as must-have games. And who would have thought that, eh?

Have a great month!

Tim Weaver, Editor

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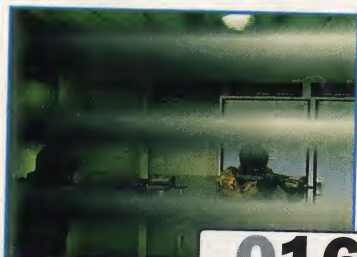


Cracked!

WWF SMACKDOWN! 2

■ Fight back in style!

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News Special!

NEW YEAR REVOLUTION

■ The top ten games of 2001 revealed!

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WIN!
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DOG WORTH
£1600

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FINAL FANTASY IX

PlayStation epic rated! Don't miss out inside!

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NEWS EXPRESS



DESIGN REVEALED!

XBox delayed?

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World exclusive! We talk to insiders in the US – could XBox be set for a delay *already*?

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We go undercover at Sony and find out why the PS2 doesn't have any games

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FIRST FINAL FANTASY MOVIE PICS 08
Amazing new shots from the breathtaking FF film

METAL GEAR SOLID 2: ALL NEW DETAILS 08



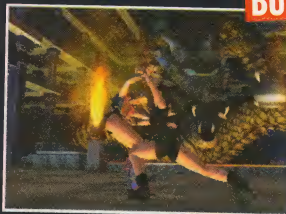
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CRACKED!

Essential tips to make you a better gamer...

BUSTED!



DEAD OR ALIVE 2

page **078** Every secret exposed in our four-page guide!

NETTED!



FIFA 2001

Know the score with tactics for the PlayStation and PS2 games.

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OUT NEXT MONTH

The pick of the best games we'll be reviewing next month, including...

PHANTASY STAR

Online soap opera exposed – the most original Dreamcast game yet.



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NEWS

EXPRESS



**"This is a welcome move
for PlayStation2. Sega has
excellent technology and a
pool of popular software."**
Sony Japan on the demise of Dreamcast

STOP PRESS!
**WORLD EXCLUSIVE
NEWS JUST IN!**

Sega to kill off Dreamcast

Stop press! Sega have revealed they are pulling out of the hardware market and focusing on other machines. VideoGamer gets the inside scoop on one of the biggest announcements in gaming history...

Minutes before VideoGamer went to press, a key source inside Japanese games giant Sega revealed that the company are to cease production of their troubled Dreamcast console from March, and will effectively become a 'third-party' developer, concentrating on releasing games for other formats, including PS2.

Speaking exclusively to VideoGamer, the insider said: "Sega has decided to concentrate on what they do best – produce and develop great games. The Dreamcast will continue to be supported with a steady flow of quality games but Sega will also be developing its key titles for other systems. Initially this will be PlayStation2, Game Boy Advance and Xbox, probably with a leaning towards Microsoft's console. However, Sega will be developing for all future platforms." Unbelievably, you can expect *Sonic* to line up with *Mario* on Gamecube.

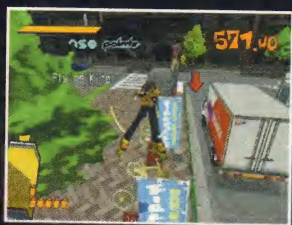
Our source also told us how Sega plan to use the Dreamcast hardware in other formats. Their plans for a PC Dreamcast card are well known but there are plans to integrate DC hardware into TV set-top boxes, such as satellite television's Pace decoders. Sega will also be focusing on WAP mobile phone gaming and network broadband gaming (online gaming).

The staggering news was denied by both Sega Europe and Sega of America, with the US going as far as to say that, "We reconfirm our commitment to Dreamcast and the continued support of Dreamcast – not just in software, but hardware too."

However, our source was keen to stress that this is the line Sega are planning to take worldwide until the week commencing January 30th, when they will make an official comment confirming that Dreamcast will cease production, and that Sega games will form a large part of

the PlayStation2, Xbox and Game Boy Advance portfolio.

The news is believed to have been leaked from the Japanese HQ, where officials high up in the company have been mulling over the future of Dreamcast for months. Indeed, previous rumours, furiously denied by Sega, included the possibility of the company shutting up shop on Dreamcast development. An official comment once again denied this, but then later whispers had Nintendo preparing a bid for the company in an effort to secure their enviable catalogue of games. (Further details of this are on page 11 of News Express.)



Sega will be supporting PlayStation2, Game Boy Advance and Xbox

This latest development is by far the most serious yet, though, especially as the news appears to have come from Sega Japan themselves (spokesperson Miyako Shimizu even went as far as to tell VideoGamer that they were, "studying various options, including ending production of Dreamcast...") while the games industry seems certain that this time it isn't rumour – it is for real.

"To be honest, it's been on the cards for a long time," said a Dreamcast developer who wished to remain anonymous. "If something like Jet Set Radio had come out on PlayStation2, Sega would have been set up for life. The company has some of the world's most innovative games, but doesn't have anyone to play them. It doesn't take a genius to realise that, by canning

Dreamcast, Sega are likely to make a hell of a lot more money, a hell of a lot quicker. The only real question was whether they'd have the guts to admit defeat. Now, at last, they have."

Sarah Chudley, of developers Bizarre Creations, the company behind Dreamcast racing game *MSR*, echoed this. She told VideoGamer: "It's got to be positive news for gamers, as Sega's strength has always been its games, so as long as they are continuing to make games that's a good thing for the industry."

The news will be heartening news for Sega's competitors, especially Sony and Microsoft, as it seems certain Sega will be concentrating on both next generation systems. Indeed, a spokesperson at Sony Japan told VideoGamer, "This is a welcome move for PlayStation2. Sega has excellent technology, and a pool of popular games software."

But, whilst the news is good for its competitors, the ending of Dreamcast production marks an ignominious end to one of the games industry's most attractive, and talented, hardware manufacturers. Despite its poor sales, Dreamcast proved a popular and exciting console for developers and gamers alike, while

its forebearer, the Saturn, enjoyed a similar level of popularity. Both, though, failed to rekindle the success of the Mega Drive, the company's mega-selling early 90s alternative to Nintendo's SNES, and while the Saturn faded away under the weight of PlayStation, Sony – and to a lesser extent, Nintendo with their N64 – appear to have sealed the fate of Sega's impressive Dreamcast.

Although Sega will be halting production of Dreamcast in March, they are keen to stress that they will continue to support the machine with software in 2001 and beyond. But, as well, they will be using PS2 and, in particular, Xbox, to showcase their games.

What do you think? E-mail us at vgn@futurenet.co.uk now!

What happens now?

So which Sega titles will be appearing on PlayStation2? As VideoGamer went to press there were conflicting reports as to how extensive the agreement with Sony actually is, and whether Sega would prefer to keep its 'crown jewels' – names such as *Sonic*, *Shenmue*, *Jet Set Radio* and *Crazy Taxi* – away from PS2 in order to barter a more lucrative deal with another console manufacturer. Microsoft, in particular, is looking for a big signing to deliver the must-have titles so far missing from the Xbox software line-up, and would be able to offer huge sums for exclusive access to Sega's biggest franchises.



■ The amazing *Wild Riders* coin-op. Could this, or titles like it, be among the games Sega will bring to PS2? Fingers crossed...

Bad blood

The decision to deal initially with Sony makes financial sense, but there's no love lost between Sega and the company which so aggressively destroyed its Saturn console (in Sega's voice recognition game *Seaman*, talking about PlayStation elicits a warning about diseases).

Sega could be more likely to see Nintendo as a long-term ally – together they are the only major players in the industry with a history of videogames as their core business.

Until Sega has formed a more secure alliance with a hardware company, its games will be marketed on whichever format can offer the biggest returns. In the immediate future, that represents PS2 and Game Boy Advance.

Coin-op legends

However badly Sega has struggled in the home console market, its arcade machines remain peerless. Sega's vast catalogue of arcade classics, from *Out Run* to *Virtua Fighter* to the forthcoming *Wild Riders* could be plundered to provide the first wave of PS2 games.

Because producing original PS2 titles from scratch can be notoriously costly, conversions of existing arcade, Dreamcast or Saturn games would be a relatively safe option.

Handheld classics

Sega's plans for Game Boy Advance have long been the subject of rumours. Now that the deal is no longer a secret, expect to see portable versions of Sega Mega Drive games and arcade titles from around 1992 and earlier.

Most coin-ops from the pre-3D era could be handled reasonably well by the powerful GBA. The likes of *Powerdrift*, *Space Harrier* and *Afterburner* would look arcade-perfect, and would sell like hot cakes on what is certain to be this year's most popular games machine.

Our predictions

It's just wild speculation, of course, and by the time you read this certain titles may already have been announced, but here goes:

■ **PS2:** *Nights*, *Ecco*, *Virtua Fighter 3*, *Space Channel 5*, *Jet Set Radio*

■ **GBA:** *Powerdrift*, *Streets Of Rage*, *Sakura Taisen*, *Sonic*, *Out Run*

Game On For Nintendo

Just six weeks to go before GBA storms Japan.

The biggest ever console launch is set to sweep Japan on March 21st, when one million Game Boy Advances and a range of 30-40 software titles hit the shops.

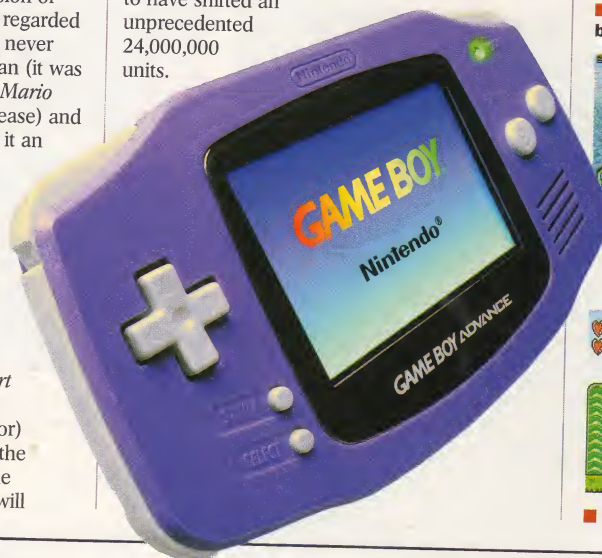
The launch line-up is spectacular, featuring some of Nintendo's most popular franchises. Leading the way is *Super Mario Advance*, a platform game based on the SNES version of *Super Mario Bros 2*. Although *SMB2* is regarded as the weakest link in the series, it was never actually released as a Mario title in Japan (it was originally called *Doki Doki Panic* - the Mario characters were pasted in for its US release) and a four-player battle mode should make it an essential purchase.

Other highlights include *Kuru Kuru Kuru Rin* (a puzzle action game), *Golden Sun* (an RPG), *Top Gear GT*, *Castlevania*, *Wai Wai Racing* (a Mario Kart clone), *Tactics Ogre* (another RPG) and *Napoleon* (real-time strategy).

A four-player version of hardcore racing classic *F-Zero* is sure to be a massive hit, and if the superb *Mario Kart Advance* (which can be played over the internet using Nintendo's Mobile Adaptor) makes it in time for the big launch day, the hordes of gamers who will have to queue through the night to secure their GBAs will

return home with wallets considerably lightened.

The GBA itself will cost ¥9,800 (£55), with software priced at up to ¥5,800 (£33) - rather more expensive than the ¥3,800 price tag on current GB games. But having seen a few of the first titles, we'd have to say that it does look worth the money. GBA launches in the UK in July, and by the end of the year Nintendo expects to have shifted an unprecedented 24,000,000 units.



■ **Mario Kart Advance** plays like the N64 version and looks far better the original SNES title. It's going to be fantastic.



■ **Soon you'll be playing the world's fastest racer, F-Zero**, against three of your mates - and you'll only need to buy one cartridge.



■ **Check out the pic on the right - multi-Mario mayhem mode.**

Star Studded

Stunning Final Fantasy movie trailer revealed!

The trailer of the *Final Fantasy* movie has just been released, and **VideoGamer** has the exclusive shots. And it looks amazing.

With a hugely talented cast, the animated film looks set to be a Hollywood blockbuster that should bring the *Final Fantasy* game series screaming into the spotlight.

The quality of animation, and use of technology is, as you

can tell from the quality of the shots, utterly breathtaking. Square have employed a load of new character modelling techniques (such as the amusing sounding 'Wrinkle simulator') as well as all the usual creative magic you'd expect from any *Final Fantasy* opus. This'll definitely be one to see on the big screen.

The film is set on Earth in 2065, where the characters are left in a deserted city to discover

the meaning of life, love and emotion and battle it out to find out who's in charge. The actors have a big task ahead then, but they should be up to the job. The cast includes Donald Sutherland, Alec Baldwin, Ving Rhames (*Mission: Impossible 2*, *Pulp Fiction*), Peri Gilpin (Roz from *Frazier*) and Ming-Na (ER's Dr Deb Chen).

It's due to hit UK cinemas in the summer. Reserve your front row seats now.



■ **Could it be any more lifelike? Before long, Brad Pitt'll be signing on down the dole office.**

■ **True to Final Fantasy form, VideoGamer expect the film to revolve around a love story.**

Grab the gear

New Metal Gear Solid 2 demo details.

More details have emerged of what's going to be on the MGS2 demo disc, packaged in with finished game *Zone Of Enders*, which is due for release here at the end of March.

First off, there's a variety of game modes to choose from, with a New Game option, in which you can play the first section of what could be the biggest game to hit the PlayStation2 so far. If there's anything you're not coping with, there's another option to alter the set up, with things like a blood option, or controller vibrations.

A Special option also gives you a movie tutorial on all the moves you can get your hands on in the game. There are a huge 32 moves, more than half of

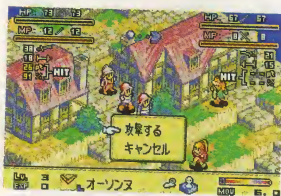
which are new to this version of the game. You'll be here for hours memorising just how to do incredible tricks, like using terrorists as a human shields.

And if you're not familiar with the series, there's even a Previous Story mode. This means that those of you unfamiliar with the series can be filled in on all the history you missed. More on page 16.





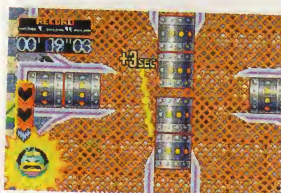
■ **Magical Vacation.**



■ **Tactics Ogre Gaiden.**



■ **Golden Sun.**



■ **Kuru Kuru Rin.**

Advance Facts

Downloadable link play

GBA's segmented link cable allows four consoles to be joined together, and it looks like four-player modes will become as common a feature in GBA games as they are on N64. Best of all, many linkable games require just one cartridge – the level data is downloaded to the three empty GBAs before play begins.

Gamecube link



GBA is an integral part of Nintendo's Gamecube plans. Four GBAs can be connected to Gamecube's controller ports for use as alternative

joypads with built-in private screens. We don't know how this will work in a game, but Nintendo's master designers are likely to come up with something revolutionary.

Mobile adaptor

There's no word on whether the mobile phone link will be released outside of Japan due to the lack of a common mobile standard elsewhere, but we're keeping our fingers crossed. The

adaptor is used for things like sharing data, entering online contests and swapping *Mario Kart* time trial ghosts over the airwaves.

SNES friendly

All of Nintendo's huge back catalogue of classic SNES games can be easily converted to run on the Game Boy Advance, so we can expect to see enhanced editions of everything from *Zelda* to *Super Metroid*. Here at **VideoGamer**, we want to see versions of *Super Tennis*, *Secret of Mana*, *Shadow Run* and *Street Fighter Alpha* too.

GBC compatible

Built into the Game Boy Advance's slimline and efficient dual-chip internal workings is a complete replica of a Game Boy Color chipset. This means that every existing GB game will work perfectly on the new machine – and often with an enhanced colour display. That's a software library of well over 1,000 titles.

Region free

Just like the current Game Boys, GBA has no regional lockouts to prevent you importing software from Japan and the States. You'll be able to order the latest hot releases from overseas and play them on your UK machine months or even years before they're translated for European gamers.

VideoGamer Opinion



Nintendo and concrete release dates don't normally go hand in hand but this month saw the long awaited Game Boy Advance receive a Japanese debut date of March 21st, with sources close to the Japanese gaming giant keen to assure **VideoGamer** that, "there's no chance of that date shifting."

We spoke to a number of UK developers, who said they were eyeing a July/August release for their games over here, suggesting the machine could be available in Blighty by early autumn.

That said, I'm still not entirely convinced Advance will be ready for late summer here. Indeed, it wouldn't surprise me if the machine didn't reach us until at least November. Promises of a worldwide release that close together are hard enough to believe at the best of times but when it's from Nintendo it's impossible, especially given their frankly abysmal track record of hitting release dates. That's not knocking the machine – it's going to be exceptional – but simply a fact. Further complications, including the supposed non-existence after all of a big name *Tekken* game means the newly formed Nintendo Europe will be keen to ensure there are enough games of the *Mario Kart Advance* ilk ready – and that will mean pushing back the launch to Christmas.

Tim Weaver
Editor

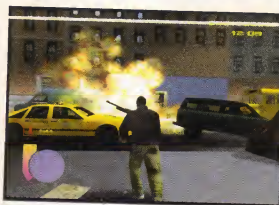
tim.weaver@futurenet.co.uk

Turok 4 confirmed!

Turok, one of the N64's best-selling franchises, is to get a Gamecube fourquel. Currently in the early design stages, *Turok 4* is, controversially, also being lined up to appear on PS2 and Xbox, despite traditionally being a Nintendo-only series. "We're hard at work with new tools and technology for all the next generation systems," says David Dienstbier, Creative Director at Acclaim-Austin, and insiders at the US developer also confirmed to **VideoGamer** that there was a demo up and running using Gamecube development kits. A separate source revealed that the visual style of the game will be similar to the *Dinotopia* TV series, which features colonial-era hunters riding spectacular harnessed dinos. If you'd like a sneak preview, check out www.dinotopia.com.



■ Cars are based on real ones. The Cortina, above, for example.



■ More missions are on foot.

Ban this game already!

Controversial Grand Theft Auto 3 revealed...

In *Grand Theft Auto* you took control of a rookie gangster, your objective to become the 'baddest mutha' on the streets, working your way up from small time crook to crime lord. Needless to say it has attracted a fair amount of controversy in its time, mostly due to the fact that you could steal and drive any vehicle in the game. Oh, and needlessly mow down innocent pedestrians.

The new game eschews the

overhead viewpoint of the last two *GTA* games for a 3D perspective enabling you to check out the action from different viewpoints. For fans of the old-style *GTA*, there's an overhead view and there's an 'in-vehicle' view, which puts you right in the middle of the action.

And other than the umpteen different cars, you can now drive speedboats and best of all fly a helicopter. The open-ended structure of the game will remain largely intact, giving players the choice of which

missions to do and how to do them. But missions will still have to be completed within a certain time limit.

GTA3 is set for PS2 before the end of the year. It could be very special indeed.





You ain't seen 'im, right?

With the Xbox not looking likely to launch until next autumn (that's autumn 2001, by the way), there are rumours about that Microsoft is already considering a handheld games machine. Apparently based on the Xbox technology, it will be compatible with the home console. Insiders have even leaked a codename for the device to me - the XBoy.

According to our friends at Rare, it seems that the company is working flat out on **Perfect Dark 2** in time for release at Christmas 2002. Apparently, Rare is putting more manpower into this one game than it has for any other game in its history.

Shenmue fans will be excited to hear that **Sega is going to make some announcements about Shenmue 2 later this month.** However, The Spy has heard some stuff in advance of this announcement. In order to cut production time, the game will use the same blueprint as the first game, albeit with a few minor refinements. The sequel will be more action based than the first game and the fighting system will be much improved. If that wasn't enough, there will be a second playable character who the player takes control of when Ryo is 'incapacitated'. The game will be largely set in China.

According to my contacts in Japan, **Squaresoft's eagerly anticipated PS2 beat-'em-up, The Bouncer, is rubbish.** Our source likened it to the ancient (and even rubbish for the time) Final Fight. Hopefully this isn't a sign of things to come from the normally reliable Square.

ANALYSE THIS!

Taking a closer look at the hottest new games

Project Eden

DETAILS ■ Format: PlayStation2/PC ■ Developer: Core Design ■ Publisher: Eidos ■ Release date: April 2001



"The team behind Tomb Raider has a crack at sci-fi..."

The team behind the Tomb Raider series have decided to have a crack at science fiction, and have come up with this, an action adventure game with an innovative style of play. It's a team game folks, and you'd be foolish not to play ball. Here's a quick breakdown of the most intriguing bits to Project Eden so far...

We're the best

Your team has four members, each with unique abilities. They might be people, robots, or even cyborgs. The girls are handy at disarming security cameras and hacking computers.

Who's who

You can play from a first person perspective (like *Quake*), or a third person perspective (like *Tomb Raider*). With this mixture, you'll find that this means you can easily keep track of your team members.

Private Investigation

Human characters are part of a police force, sent to the basements of this sci-fi world to investigate a draining of energy resources. But we won't give away who the baddies really are.

Upstairs downstairs

The action happens in the foul basements of a sci-fi world of towering buildings, where the filth live. If you're rich, you're higher up in the physical and social echelons of society.

Power me up, Scotty

If you've got enough energy resources, you can respawn a team member if they get killed. You can also make mini-robots or little flying ones, to reach the parts other robots can't.

Timeline

Diaries and personal organisers across the nation face redundancy...

Smile for the camera...



■ London's Candid Arts Gallery presents the 30 finalists of the Game Boy Color Photographic awards today. Why not check it out?

Freebie fest

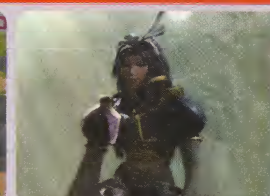


■ The Funhouse, Kent today becomes the first games store with same day delivery if you live within a 10-mile radius. Lovely!

Get your Moto runnin'

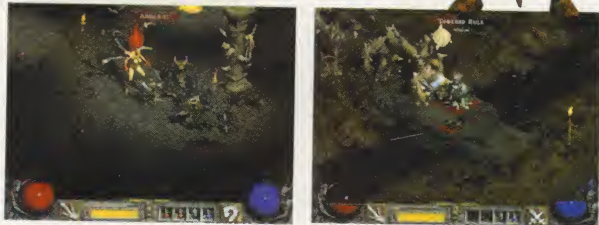


■ Do yourself a favour, ditch those four wheels and throw your leg over two in *Moto GP*, on the shelves today. It's amazing! Also out is *Final Fantasy IX*, the last in the incredibly popular series to appear on PS. To find out our verdicts on both games, flick to Reviews, from page 22.



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7th 8th 9th 10th 11th 12th 13th 14th 15th 16th 17th 18th 19th 20th 21st



Diablo 2 fiasco

Online game falls prey to hackers.

Online players of addictive PC role-playing game, *Diablo II* were shocked to find that when logging on just after Christmas, their characters had been slashed to death and robbed of their hard earned points by hackers.

Players discovered that not only had their characters 'disappeared', but a bloodbath was all that was left behind, and months of hard work scoring items for each character had been erased. The sabotage is thought to be the work of hackers, bored during the Christmas period, who thought it was time to display a bit of creative genius.

Developers Blizzard were irate, and have taken the unusual step of restoring all players' characters. When we asked them how they planned to prevent people from doing this again they told **VideoGamer**, "We recognise that the loss of a characters or unique items is a

cause of great concern to players. We will be monitoring the realms in the game for flagrant abusers in future."

For more details, go to www.blizzard.com.

Scandal down under

■ Meanwhile down in New Zealand, pirated copies of videogames are being sold with links to child porn sites.

The scandal was uncovered when someone purchased a copy of a game, which they didn't believe to be pirated, from a car boot sale. When they loaded up the PlayStation game, they found it contained direct links to sites on the Internet, containing thousands of images of child porn.

Since it was uncovered, there have been hundreds of complaints from people who bought the game, and New Zealand police have tracked down the suppliers of the pirated filth and have them in custody.

The New Zealand government are planning to use this case as evidence at a conference on Internet safety in Singapore this month.



Nintendo to buy Sega?

Could the unthinkable happen?

Following on from rumours that Sega were giving up on the Dreamcast, the gaming world was rocked this month by staggering gossip suggesting their oldest rivals, Nintendo, were about to buy them out.

Business sources in the USA claim that Nintendo and Sega are in discussions for a possible buy-out, and that Nintendo are going to rescue Sega from financial difficulties by buying the company for around \$2 billion.

The discussions were first uncovered by the *New York Times*, and although Nintendo and Sega have denied all rumours and demanded a retraction be printed by the newspaper, a follow-up story was printed the next day.

However, the rumours have had a positive effect on Sega's flagging share price, with them shooting up 10.5% in contrast to Nintendo's, which lost 5.4%. For Sega, it seems, any publicity is good publicity and whispers in Japan and the US suggest Sega may even have begun the rumours *themselves*.

The buy-out would mean Sega titles make it to Gamecube and Game Boy,

while there's also a school of thought that suggests a buy-out by Nintendo is entirely realistic in a bid to remove potential competition for Gamecube. However, a key insider at Nintendo US told **VideoGamer** that the rumours "were nothing more than rumours. We're not - repeat not - buying Sega."

What do you think? E-mail us at vgm@futurenet.co.uk now!

Fish of the day



■ At least one small sector of Sega's business is making money. Fish Life is a virtual aquarium that works in a stand alone unit. Fish Life offers several different 'episodes' and using touch screen technology, you can play with and feed the fish. Now Japanese sushi restaurants have got on board and allowed punters to order sushi from the 'virtual' fish tank.

Expect to see 'Fish 'n' Chips Life' on a greasy street corner near you very, very soon.

Sex versus Videogames

■ *Playboy* magazine has proven that men would rather play with videogames and techy gadgetry than with foxy members of the opposite sex.

Surprised? Er, probably just a little bit. But the *Playboy* study *did* reveal that if stranded on a desert island, 75% of males would forego any type of electronic device for the company of a beautiful woman. So, perhaps the continuation of world populations is safe after all. Perhaps.

Scientific research has also recently shown in brain scans taken of people playing *Street Fighter 2*, that the brain patterns are most closely associated with one of someone having sex.

We conducted our own study of **VideoGamer** readers, and we can confirm that 83% would take a game to a desert island instead of a romantic companion. (That's not what it said on that form addressed to you, Kate - Ed)

Most interestingly, their reasoning was usually financially based. One reader commented: "*Baldur's Gate* has given me over ninety hours of gaming time for £30. Women make constant financial demands. There's no contest..."

Who said romance was dead, eh?

Every man's phantasy



■ From the makers of *Sonic the Hedgehog* comes *Phantasy Star Online* on Dreamcast. It's an RPG that you can play on your



lonesome or go online and team up with three other role-playing dudes from the comfort of your sofa. Check out our preview on page 94.

Guess who?

VideoGamer

■ No Valentines? Cheer up with issue 5 of **VideoGamer**. It won't sort out your sex life but you'll be the most informed gamer out there.

22nd

23rd

24th

25th

26th

27th

28th

1st

2nd

3rd

4th

5th

6th

7th

8th

9th



■ Microsoft were keen to involve gamers in the design of the Xbox controller, and wanted it to be "a bit like driving a car". And it is. Everything on the controller is exactly where your gaming subconscious would expect it to be – confirmed by the two incredibly comfy shoulder/trigger buttons underneath, which are exactly where your forefingers would expect them to be.

■ When News Editor Kate got her hands on one this month, she took J Allard to task over the fact that, despite being very comfortable, it was miles too big for her dainty hands. He replied: "With our Japanese target audience being younger, and the Japanese market in general, we'll be making a smaller one for younger people or people with smaller hands. We'd like customers to have a choice with which they get packaged with their console, but we'll see. That'll be hard to organise." And yes, it is a copycat Dreamcast controller with analogue controls thrown in, and it's by no means as original as the Gamecube controller. But that doesn't mean it doesn't work...

XBox: new delay?

Designed confirmed. Launch put back?



A source within Microsoft has exclusively revealed to **VideoGamer** that, despite the company announcing a 'firm' European launch for the Xbox of March 2002 at this month's CES Entertainment show in Las Vegas, there's "absolutely no chance they'll make it."

The source claims: "nVidia, the suppliers of the console's graphics processing unit, are having major problems with the audio and video aspects of the Xbox chip. I'll be amazed if they get it out in the States for Christmas and Europe for March 2002. We've spoken to a number of American developers and I don't know a single one

anywhere near ready to show what they're working on, or even have planned, for Xbox."

What's more, the source reported that the "majority of Japanese software companies are holding off launching development software in case the Xbox proves not to be financially viable."

These are trying times for Microsoft, who've just unveiled the Xbox's final design. On top of hardware manufacturing problems, they had just two games to show. Both games, *Malice* and *Munch's Oddysee*, so Microsoft claim, were running on 20% of the power of the final machine. With time ticking away to the E3 games show in LA in May, the Xbox is on an

unfeasibly tight schedule.

Microsoft are banking on being able to cash in on the Christmas season with the Xbox launching in autumn, at least in the US and Japan. The E3 show is seen by the industry as a crucial opportunity to show off

to play at least 10 strong titles at E3." But with only two games shown in working form how on earth are they going to make it?

"It's going to be a huge challenge," says Allard. "With manufacturing technology as it is, you could build a console

Microsoft are looking like they've bitten off more than they can chew

finished games, and the scope of a console, yet with only a few months to go, Microsoft are looking like they've bitten off more than they can chew. We spoke to J Allard, the Xbox's 'Minister of Fun', who nervously agreed: "You've got to be able

and get the games going very quickly, given that it only takes a couple of months to build the hardware. But developers are dependent on the final hardware to make their magic. What we've tried to do is to ease them into it, with a little bit

What's on the box?

With new features revealed and all the gadgetry on show, we take a peek under the hood...

■ The jewel on top doesn't light up. Why waste money?



■ Powerful fans are needed to cool that much brain. But you'll hardly hear them.

■ The CD tray is here. You'll have to buy a remote control to play DVDs though.

■ To protect your Xbox from breaking, leads fall out if you trip over them.

■ Until last month, the X was chrome but this design was cheaper.



■ Here's your power socket.

■ Your SCART or picture lead will go in here.

■ No net surfing with Xbox, just an ethernet socket.

at a time. What you see with *Malice* is what they've achieved so far. Every day they get a little bit closer to the final Xbox."

But, this drip-feeding of hardware could mean a delay of five or six months – or even more. "I don't think Xbox will be released in the UK until autumn 2002," said our source.

So, how do Microsoft expect to be a serious contender to PS2 and Nintendo's Gamecube if they haven't got full demos of games up and running? And can their developers beat the hourglass? N64 classic, *Zelda 64*, took four years to develop. Xbox developers, by Microsoft's own schedule, have 11 months.

Confirmed! More Xbox games...



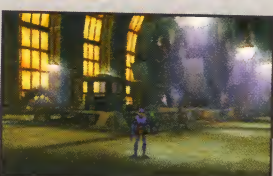
■ Electronic Arts are officially signed up. FIFA is a sure thing.



■ A version of *Tony Hawk's* has also just been confirmed.



■ Meet *Malice's* Alice. A red-head with a hammer. Ooooh...



■ The latest *Munch's Oddysee* shots. Nice use of lighting.

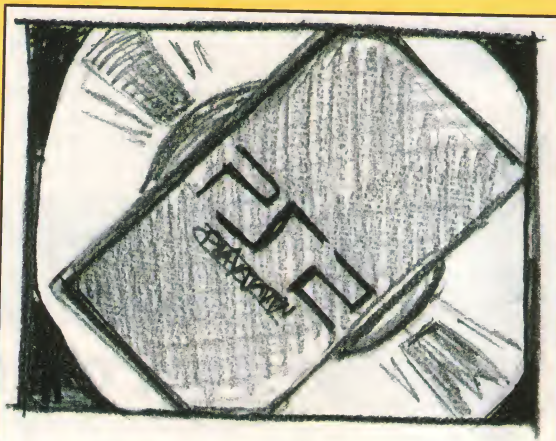
Lights, Camera, Action

The Xbox comes to the big screen

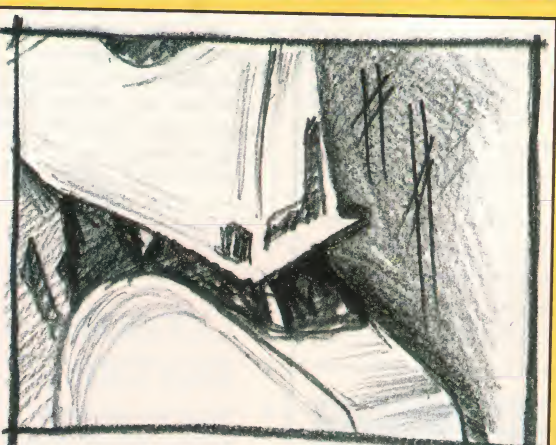
An industry insider has revealed to VideoGamer the scale of dirty tricks we can expect from the Xbox advertising campaign. Have a look below to see the first Xbox advert revealed.

We can also confirm that the company conducting the European marketing of the Xbox is Bartle Bogle Hegarty. This may not sound like exciting news – until we tell you that they were the marketing designers for Sega's Dreamcast console until recently.

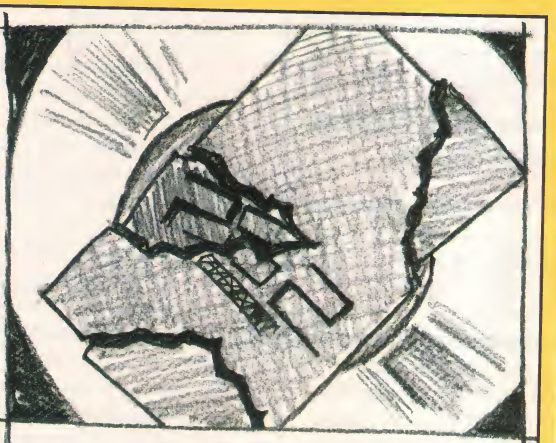
Aside from their sneaky backstabbing antics, Microsoft have been keen to tell everyone just how big the Xbox marketing budget is. \$500 Million to be precise. And the spending spree starts here, with television and cinema ads due to start rolling shortly. Here's how they'll look...



■ The opening shot is of a PlayStation2 on a silver plate.



■ A Microsoft robot then shows off a few moves...



■ While dancing about, he's somehow smashed up the PS2!

Video Gamer Opinion



When my grandparents popped off nearly a decade ago, I inherited their VCR. It was built in the eighties – the Record button's a big red circle – but despite now hiding behind a sparkly DVD player, it still works.

So when, earlier this month, a real, live Xbox was thrust into my hands, I felt right at home. It's very eighties.

It's not small, trendy and chrome but heavy and *big*, but Microsoft at least have thought less about fashion and more about what to put in it. It's about *games*, not whether it'll look good in your Ikea living room. It's about getting as many brain cells and graphic power inside as possible.

What's more, they've not only used real life gamers in every step of the design and creative process, but they've had consumers in mind from day one. Why have a chrome X when a plain one would be cheaper? What's wrong with retro if it runs the most impressive looking graphics ever seen...?

By thinking less about fashion, and more about gamers, the Xbox will be competitively priced. Whether they can get the innards and games made in time (and whether those games will be great *console* games) is another matter entirely.

But, for the time being, don't give into Noughties Chic and diss its looks. It'll do exactly what it says on the tin.

Kate Little
News Editor

katherine.little@futurenet.co.uk

Introducing... Gentlemen's Relish



Morning! Four games you might have missed that you should buy straight away? Don't mind if I do...



Dead or Alive 2

■ Out now on: **PS2**

Never really been one for all this martial arts nonsense, but this game has certainly changed my mind and it has nothing to do with those buxom wenches wrestling in their leather outfits. This reversals-based fighting game hasn't got the depth that *Tekken Tag* has but is still a feast for hot-blooded males among you.



Escape from Monkey Island

■ Out now on: **PC**

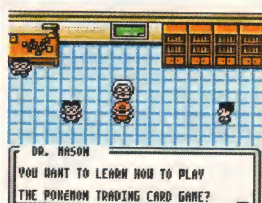
Ah, this takes me back to when I used to play pirates as a young whippersnapper with the maid's daughter. I'd play Blackbeard and make her walk my plank into pretend shark-infested waters. Anyway, this is just about the funniest adventure game ever made and will cheer you up no end.



Samba de Amigo

■ Out now on: **Dreamcast**

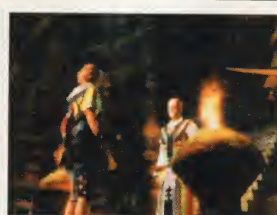
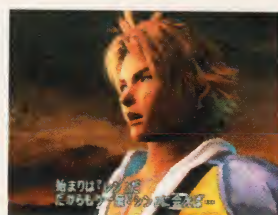
Isn't it a small world? 'Livin' La Vida Loca', as sung by Ricky Martin in this game, is also a bar I used to frequent in Cuba, where you could get a monkey to shake his maracas in time to a samba beat. And for £100 (with maracas and mats) you too can experience this dance to your heart's content.



Pokemon Trading Card Game

■ Out now on: **GBC**

This is like a game that was popular in King's Cross during the Blitz. When those sirens went off you had to get to the closest shelter fast and huddle with the masses. That has little to do with *Pokemon*, apart from the fighting with little furry creatures. Ahem.



New Final Fantasy

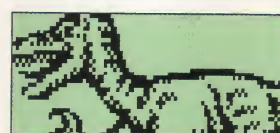
First pics of Final Fantasy X.

Thanks to a recently published ad in a Japanese games magazine, we can reveal the first ever screenshots for *Final Fantasy X*, the first FF game to appear on PS2.

FFX will be the first *Final Fantasy* game to be entirely real time, in other words there will be no static backgrounds and the graphics will be drawn

in 3D rather than the 2D seen in the PlayStation games. The power of the PS2 has also enabled a few other significant improvements. The game will feature actors' voices rather than the reams of text that appeared in the PS versions. Characters will even have fully animated faces.

FFX is out this winter in Japan so expect it in the UK sometime in 2002.



That old chestnut...

Vodafone comes up Trumps.

Those of you who wasted precious hours playing playground classic *Top Trumps* rather than kiss-chase will be pleased to hear that the game has been reincarnated especially for your mobile phone.

Publishers Digital Bridges are shortly to clinch a deal with Vodafone to ensure that the game is available to as many

phone owners as possible.

The nature of the game lends itself perfectly to the WAP phone, and this looks set to take off as people desperately try to claim all the cards. And you don't even have to be with someone to play it.

The game will launch in February with three of the best decks: Dinosaurs, Sports Cars and European Footballers, with loads more subjects to follow.

Console Warfare

Heard the one about Saddam Hussein importing 4,000 PS2s to build a nuclear weapon? Well, we can confirm there's nothing to be afraid of.

UN Officials were concerned that many PS2s could be used to power military applications. And consumers were outraged that Saddam could have 4,000 consoles when there were none here.

A GCHQ spokesperson told *VideoGamer*: "It's not really top of our list of things to worry about. Perhaps he bought them as Christmas presents for his faithful soldiers to entertain them?"

Swan Gone

Little known handheld, the WonderSwan Color, has gone on sale in Japan and sold out in *two days*.

The company behind Game Boy's only real competition, Bandai, shifted 300,000 units so quickly that insiders at the mighty Nintendo told *VideoGamer* they're now considered *serious* competition. Japanese sources also say there's an Internet emulator that can convert GB titles to WonderSwan games, making the WS look even more attractive.

Sadly, Bandai say they have no plans to release the WS over here, but you can import one. Try www.express.com.

EXTRA! EXTRA! EXTRA!

NEWS IN BRIEF

HALO CONFUSION

The long awaited sci-fi 3D wargame, Halo, (for the PC) could be even further away. Rumours of it being developed for Xbox and not for PC are frustrating gamers who have been waiting literally years for this thing of beauty. We'll bring you the official line just as soon as we get it.

DESERT RATS

Developers Acclaim have just announced a new racing game for PS2. It's called Paris-Dakar Rally and is based on the actual race from Paris to Dakar of the same name. You can



■ Looking smooth. More on Paris-Dakar Rally soon.

expect hot 4WD action, hairy terrain, and beautiful, accurately mapped scenery.

A HOT DATE AT LAST...

Epic games have inadvertently come up with an approximate date for the long awaited Unreal 2. Publishers Infogrames confirmed for us a release of spring 2002, but we're likely to see some demo footage at the E3 games show in May which should satiate our appetites until then. Still a long way off though, sadly.

FREEBIE MADNESS

Freelader.com have just announced another four games will be going on the site for free download to anyone who registers. February's freebie games are Tennis Antics,



■ Freebie football sims are all the rage at Freelader...

Grand Theft Auto 2, Creatures, and PureFootball Online Manager. So what are you waiting for? Get down there and check it out...

THE END OF THE WORLD...

Online PC gaming giant BarrysWorld have just had to shut up shop due to lack of funds. BarrysWorld is the second big online gaming portal to close since Christmas. Sadly, BarrysWorld had just become Europe's largest online gaming hub, with more than 300,000 players every month. Gamers should head to the BarrysWorld site (www.BarrysWorld.com) for advice on the best alternative portal. RIP Barry.

Game Boy goes Retro

Nintendo goes all nostalgic.

In a bid to flog the Nintendo Game Boy to older generations, PR agency Cake Media have commissioned top British fashion designers to come up with something slightly more funky than the usual plastic wallet to carry it in.

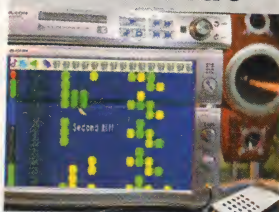
Traditionally, the Game Boy's been regarded as a toy for 8-14 year olds but to

coincide with Nintendo's push for an older audience, and given the added nostalgia the oldies feel for the little 'ole Game Boy they used to play as a kid, Cake and the designers have decided to incorporate GBs into clothes and shoes.

The original designs are set to be auctioned off in aid of Nintendo's Starlight Charity. Expect to see funky GB-shaped pockets nationwide soon.



Music Maestro



■ We suspect developers Rage Software have bitten off more than they can chew with their latest project. They're bringing *MTV Music Generator* to the Game Boy, and potentially GBA, later this year. Due on PS2 in spring, this huge game enables you access to all manner of music programming and mixing delights. But without the speaker and amp options offered on PS2, we're not sure how it's going to sound on the GB. More soon.



On the trail of Lara

Tomb Raider movie exposed!

Paramount Pictures have released the trailer for the new *Tomb Raider* film.

It shows Lara, played by Angelina Jolie of *Gone In 60 Seconds* fame, in various action sequences, including training against a robot and a massive fight against numerous assailants in her mansion home. Judging from the trailer,

the film is going to be pretty action packed - with lots of stunts set in both Cambodia and England.

The film also stars Jon Voight as Lara's father (Jolie's real-life dad) and *Red Dwarf*'s Chris Barrie as her butler. *Tomb Raider: The Movie* will be out in the summer.

For more info, check out www.tombraidermovie.com.

Bargain Hunter

Ubi Soft Exclusive Collection

Format: PlayStation

Normal Price: £30

Bargain Price: £10

Over the next few months Ubi Soft will be rolling out a game collection for this ludicrous price. Among the titles you can expect are *Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six*, *Monaco Grand Prix*, *Grandia* and *Killer Loop*.

GAMES

Format: Dreamcast, PlayStation, Game Boy

HMV are having a mighty clear out, which they swear is going to last for a few months. You can get 2 games for £30 across formats. Titles in the deal include *Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation*, *Driver*, *Silent Hill* and *Rayman 2*.

GAMES

Format: Dreamcast, PlayStation, Game Boy

Gameplay.co.uk have reduced the price of almost all their games by a few quid. Not only that, but on some offers they've cut out the delivery charge too, which makes it an utter bargain to shop there. Too many offers to list here. Check out the site for all the details.

PLAYSTATION2

Format: PlayStation2

Head for www.adtrader.co.uk and get a console for less than the retail price of £300. Absolute bargain.

STOP PRESS!

■ Reports have seeped into the office that the *Buffy The Vampire Slayer* game could turn out to be exclusive to Xbox. Online news sites are reporting that despite being expected on Dreamcast, PlayStation, PC and already released on Game

Boy Color, it could all change when Microsoft steals Buffy's thunder. It's a huge title for the format, so there's sure to be a fight about it.

■ **VideoGamer** can confirm the first details of PlayStation3 and we can

As we were sprinting to the printers, some very exciting news came our way!

reveal that it will be a total entertainment experience. The PS3 will be a single platform, with distribution potential for all of Sony's interests, including music, movies, and probably even TV. It will also feature fully functioning broadband

connection, unlike its parent console, the PlayStation2.

■ We can confirm that Left Field, developers behind *Excite Bike* for the N64, are working on a 1080° *Snowboarding* sequel for Gamecube.

get the most out of your unwanted games



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the dedicated on-line console trading site

trade for free at www.consoletrader.com

Sell - Auction - Find - Buy - Hints - Cheats - Codes - Nintendo - Sega - Sony - DVD - Retro

New Year Revolution

10 games that'll

transform gaming in 2001...

Ever the harbingers of joy in the haze of wintry gloom, here's the VideoGamer Top 10 Reasons For Getting Excited About Gaming in 2001. We've selected the ten most innovative, most exciting, most downright *blockbusting* games across all formats pencilled in for a 2001 release – and we're confident you'll shake off the New Year blues with this lot to look forward to...

10

Daytona USA 2001

■ In at number 10 comes a ripe piece of videogaming history. Originally on the Dreamcast's pre-cursor, the Sega Saturn, this arcade racer is widely viewed as the mother of all arcade racers. On the DC this year, its new guise may not be *that* innovative graphically, but when it's this intense and this much fun, who cares? In truth, you should find this version has a comfortably familiar feel, but new courses and cars, as well as the *original* cars and soundtrack, help it stand tall on its own. Best of all, it plays stunningly, and that intensity never stops, since however often you flip or knock your car you'll never stop motoring.



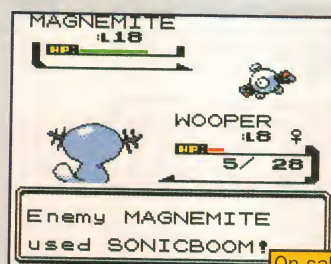
On sale: **Spring**



9

Pokémon Gold/Silver

■ Tsch. If only we'd bought shares in Nintendo *before* they released *Pokémon*. If this isn't the biggest selling game of 2001, we'll sell our gran. *Pokémon* on the Game Boy and GBC has proved to be one of the most involved and absorbing series' in gaming history (and one of the most successful) and its next incarnation is the deepest and most well-designed so far. *Pokémon Gold* and *Silver* feature 251 new Pokémon, with monsters unique to both versions (like *Red* and *Blue*). It'll also provide uses for the GB Printer, Link cable and the Infrared port. And there's even an internal clock for real-time play.



On sale: **Easter**



8

ISS Pro Evolution 2

■ With an early Japanese version already in the VideoGamer office, we can confidently say that this will *not* do a FIFA and just bolt on a few new tweaks. *ISS Pro Evolution 2* for the PlayStation is a whole new ball game. All aspects of the gameplay have been improved: crossing the ball, free kicks, scoring and injuries. In fact, there are injuries *galore* in this version. Players now get knocks, and the player *inflicting* the tackle will have to go too – yep, the original's appalling referees are now a good deal stricter. Best of all, the play is even more fluid and noticeably tougher. Top.



On sale: **March**



7

Sonic Adventure 2

■ *Sonic Adventure* featured some of the best graphics on Dreamcast. They're about to be trounced by *Sonic Adventure 2*. It's faster, smoother and more polished than its predecessor and it's going to be just what Dreamcast owners need to boost morale. In the demo of the first level, exclusively revealed to VideoGamer, Sonic leaps out of a chopper, grabs a surf board, surfs down to the city and that's where the action begins: Sonic travels so fast that you might actually have to slow him down and avoid power-ups just to see him. Staggering pace and new effects and tricks make this an absolute must-have for 2001.



On sale: **Spring**



Conker's Bad Fur Day

6

■ It may look cute, but don't be deceived: *Conker's Bad Fur Day* is going to break new ground as the crudest game ever to hit Nintendo's traditionally family-orientated N64. Strictly for the over 18s, this is the story of a hapless squirrel who's stuck in the worst day of his life. First class animation, movie spoofs, sexual innuendo, tons of outrageous profanity and staggering levels of gore are all here in abundance – yet aside from the swearing, *Conker* stands out as a really cracking 3D platformer. Intrigued? So are we. But you'll have to wait until March to get your hands on the game that will turn Nintendo's philosophy on its head.



On sale: March

Half-Life

5

■ This game first arrived on the PC in 1998. Since then it's been showered with awards and generally acknowledged as the Best PC Game of All Time. So, this year, when it comes to DC and PS2, not only can we expect top action gaming and an involving plot, but best of all, one of the first games to put the online gaming capabilities of both formats to the test. The story revolves around a scientist who's forced to blast his way out of an alien invasion, with a bit of a government cover-up to spice things up. As well as the existing add-ons, this new version will have loads of original effects and new environments to put your scientist-turned-hero through his paces and make your PC-playing mates very jealous.

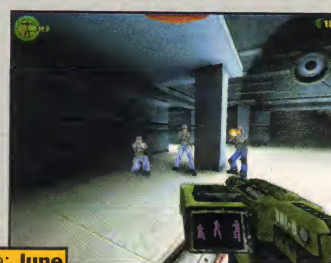


On sale: April

Red Faction

4

■ We took a look at this in News last issue, and if all goes to plan this ground-breaking first-person shooter should be breathtaking. Blow up a wall in *Red Faction* and you can stroll through the hole you've made. Burst a water tank and the game *stunningly* recreates H2O. This sort of modelling of game environments has never been done before. And with all the heat-seeking weapons you could possibly desire, some utterly brilliant enemy intelligence and the ability to hide in the shadows and sneak up on your enemies, *Red Faction* is a serious contender for best first-person shooter this year. It's heading for the PC and PlayStation2, and for once, the disparity in graphical quality between the formats should be almost nil.



On sale: June

Gran Turismo 3

3

■ *VideoGamer's* US correspondent dubbed this "The most beautiful racing game seen on any system ever". High praise indeed, which, looking at *GT3* in action this month, is hard to deny. For its PS2 release in March, *GT3* boasts incredible car modelling, lighting and backgrounds. Sony are being coy about the number of cars available, but we can confirm it's well over 130. Developers Polyphony are also working on a six-player link function (the first of its kind) but it'll require a firewire, three PS2s, three TVs and three copies of the game to run it. However, without six players, the other players are replaced by computer drivers. There'll even be a new sound system which means you'll be able to choose your own in-car tunes.

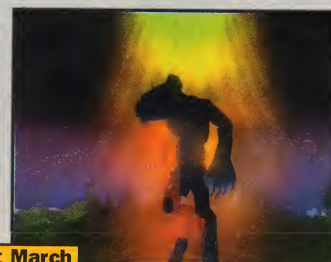


On sale: March

Black & White

2

■ Lionhead Studios have been working on this PC strategy game for so long it's hard to imagine it being anything other than *perfect*. You're the ruler of a huge, intricately mapped world, which you view from a spired temple and observe different tribes going about their daily lives. You have to persuade them to worship you; their prayers enable you to perform miracles, good or evil, that'll influence the temperance and climate of your world. Giant mammals also roam the land acting on your, or a contending rulers', behalf. It's incredibly intricate, but Lionhead say it's simple enough for even non-strategy fans to get hooked on. It's going to be a big online game too, with the world filled with hordes of other players all vying for control. Exceptional.

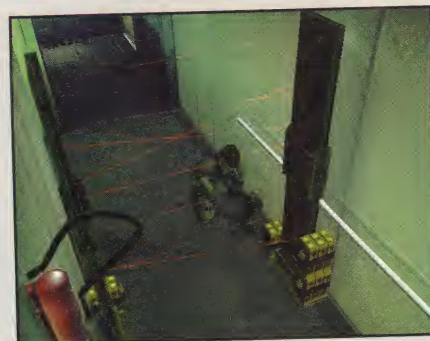


On sale: March

1



■ Once you've blasted these guards you'll find the lockers are a great place to stash them.



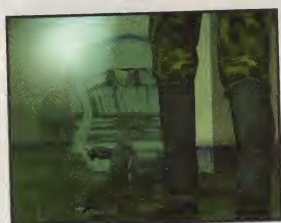
■ To navigate this laser net, you'll find the fire extinguisher on the wall comes in handy.

Metal Gear Solid 2

Sons of Liberty



■ Hanging by your fingers in torrential rain is no-one's idea of fun. In *MGS2* however, suddenly it becomes very exciting...



■ Cardboard boxes are an ace hiding place. Great view too!



■ The size of the z's tell you how long he'll be out for.



■ Locker-room cupboards are useful. While you're hiding, a handy new radar screen will show you where the guards are.

■ And storming in at number one, *Metal Gear Solid 2*. Developers Konami this month visited VideoGamer HQ to let us play the latest version of the game and we can happily report that it's the most ambitious and impressive PS2 game yet. In fact, it could be one of the best games ever.

The story opens on the outer deck of a freight cruise ship, parked up in US waters, and its your job, as superspy Solid Snake, to negotiate the three levels up to the ship's bridge, where you have to find out the destination of the ship. The boat is a US Marine ship and it's carrying the treasured cargo of the Marines' latest experiment, Metal Gear Ray, a mobile robotic nuclear device (the sequel to the first game's awesome Metal Gear Rex). The ship is hijacked by Russians, disparate personalities board the vessel vying for control of Ray, and all the time someone *else* is watching Snake because... oh, it's too good to let slip. Suffice to say, like the first game, the plot's straight out of a Hollywood thriller.

The environments are incredible, with almost everything you see interactable. Bottles explode when you fire at them, glass shatters, bullets lodge in walls, enemy legs explode into puffs of blood when you hit them, and you can even use your surroundings by hiding in lockers and boxes.

Even better are the *throwaway* features, such as Snake's binoculars. When you're out on the ship's deck, the sea spray brilliantly forms a water effect on the visor making you want to get up and wipe it off! A V Sensor feature means the controller vibrates in your hand as enemies get closer – to simulate your increasing heart beat. So if your controller's almost jumping out of your hand, then the enemy's close.

For weapons, there's a host of familiar ones like Chaff grenades, which briefly confuse the signals from security cameras, and stun grenades. But many of the guns are still under wraps: we only met one M9 15, that only fires tranquiliser darts.

Christmas can't come soon enough.

On sale: Christmas 2001



■ Meet Olga, the Russian Commander's daughter. She's a fox. She's also trying to kill you. Nice.

WARNING
This game
blood, gore
Some play

WARNING

This game features explicit
blood, gore and violence throughout.
Some players may find this disturbing.

WHEN STEEL FAILS

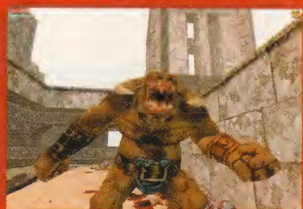
FLESH IS YOUR LAST WEAPON

"...a phenomenal engine boasting
realistic mutilation, convincing
physics and some of the best
lighting we've ever had the
pleasure to witness."

PC Zone

OUT FEB 2001

SEVERANCETM BLADE OF DARKNESS

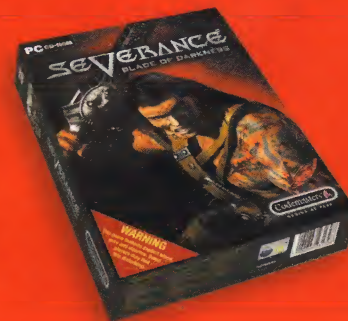


4 characters. 100+ weapons. 1 fantasy blood-quest.



Certification
pending.

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GENIUS AT PLAY[™]

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UK Top 40 Games

Check out the movers and shakers in the games market with VideoGamer's user-friendly analysis.

Grappling jollies

WWF Smackdown! 2



■ Leaving its *Ready 2 Rumble* counterpart floundering in the lower half of the table, *Smackdown! 2* on PlayStation has muscled its way to number Three to rub shoulders with regular top-spot hoggers *Who Wants...* and *FIFA 2001*. And rightly so. A fantastic mixture of beat-'em-up and pantomime, with appearances from WWF stalwarts The Rock and Stone Cold Steve Austin and a huge array of moves, it's an absolute hoot – and considering there have been some awful wrestler games, that's no mean feat.



Bargain Hunter

Theme Park World

■ You can get hold of the PC version of this brilliant management sim at HMV's website (www.hmv.co.uk) for a totally bargainous £9.99. You can only get it this cheap online though – HMV say they won't match prices in their stores. So be quick!

£10



Crash Team Racing

■ Making a welcome return to the charts is this beauty of a kart racer – the best on PlayStation (although not a patch on the N64's *Mario Kart*). And a re-release on Platinum has rejuvenated *CTR*'s popularity all the way to number 15. Respect.



TOP 40 GAMES

- 1 **WHO WANTS TO BE A MILLIONAIRE** ■ PS/DC/PC ■ £25
- 2 **FIFA 2001** ■ PS/PC/PS2 ■ £35-£45
- 3 **WWF SMACKDOWN! 2** ■ PS ■ £30
- 4 **DRIVER 2** ■ PS ■ £35
- 5 **SSX: SNOWBOARD SUPERCROSS** ■ PS2 ■ £45
- 6 **TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 2** ■ PS ■ £35
- 7 **THE WORLD IS NOT ENOUGH** ■ PS/N64 ■ £35-£40
- 8 **MEDAL OF HONOUR: UNDERGROUND** ■ PS ■ £25
- 9 **CHAMP MANAGER: 00/01** ■ PC ■ £30
- 10 **THEME PARK WORLD** ■ PS2/PS/PC ■ £40
- 11 **TEKKEN TAG TOURNAMENT** ■ PS2 ■ £40
- 12 **RAYMAN** ■ PS/PC/GB ■ £15-£30
- 13 **TIMESPLITTERS** ■ PS2 ■ £40
- 14 **TOMB RAIDER CHRONICLES** ■ PS/DC/PC ■ £30-£40
- 15 **CRASH TEAM RACING** ■ PS ■ £20
- 16 **THE SIMS** ■ PC ■ £25
- 17 **TOY STORY 2** ■ PS/PC/GB ■ £15-£30
- 18 **F1 CHAMPIONSHIP SEASON 2000** ■ PS2 ■ £45
- 19 **DRIVER** ■ PS ■ £35
- 20 **TOMB RAIDER: LAST REVELATION** ■ PS ■ £35
- 21 **THE SIMS: LIVIN' IT UP** ■ PC ■ £40
- 22 **MUSIC** ■ PS/PC ■ £35-£45
- 23 **TOM CLANCY'S RAINBOW SIX** ■ PC ■ £45
- 24 **POKEMON PINBALL** ■ GB ■ £25
- 25 **TOY RACER** ■ DC ■ £5
- 26 **DEAD OR ALIVE 2** ■ PS2/DC ■ £40
- 27 **FIFA '99** ■ PS ■ £20
- 28 **102 DALMATIANS** ■ PS ■ £30
- 29 **SPYRO: YEAR OF THE DRAGON** ■ PS ■ £25
- 30 **ARMY MEN: LAND, SEA, AIR** ■ PS ■ £30
- 31 **DINO CRISIS** ■ PS ■ £30
- 32 **DIE HARD TRILOGY 2** ■ PC/PS ■ £35-£45
- 33 **READY 2 RUMBLE ROUND 2** ■ PS2 ■ £40
- 34 **GRAN TURISMO 2** ■ PS ■ £20
- 35 **C&C: RED ALERT 2** ■ PC ■ £35
- 36 **SPYRO THE DRAGON 2** ■ PS ■ £35
- 37 **POKEMON YELLOW** ■ GB ■ £25
- 38 **RIDGE RACER V** ■ PS2 ■ £40
- 39 **POKEMON RED** ■ GB ■ £25
- 40 **RUGRATS: SEARCH FOR REPTAR** ■ PC/PC ■ £30

SSX: Snowboard Supercross

■ One of the better attractions for PS2's launch line-up, *SSX* has gone from strength to strength since the console became more readily available on the high street. *SSX* might not be realistic, or subtle, but this cool boarder sure is heaps of fun.



Tekken Tag Tournament

■ After entering the chart at number Eight last issue, the PlayStation2's brilliantly stylish *Tekken Tag* has maintained its rather constricting grasp on the high ranks of the chart – and it's selling 40% more than its main rival *Dead or Alive 2*.



Bargain Hunter

Dead or Alive 2

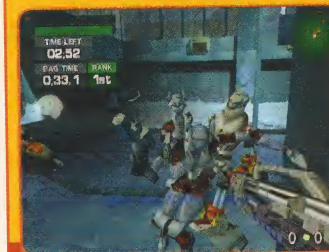
■ Nab yourself a cut-price copy of this cracking beat-'em-up from www.amazon.co.uk for £34.99 (PlayStation2). You'll have to pay for delivery, but it should still work out cheaper than going down the shops. And you don't have to leave your chair! Marvellous.

£34



TimeSplitters

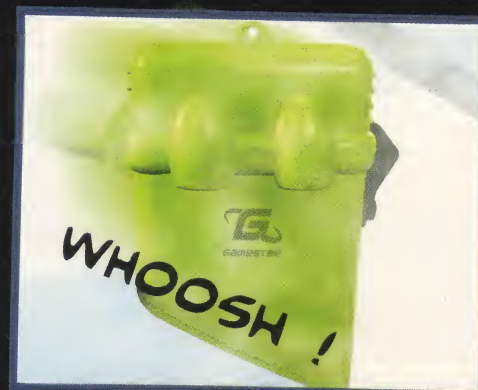
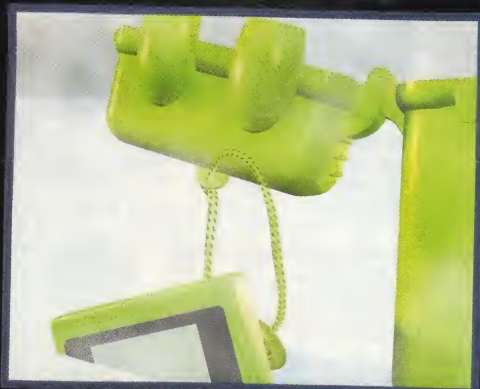
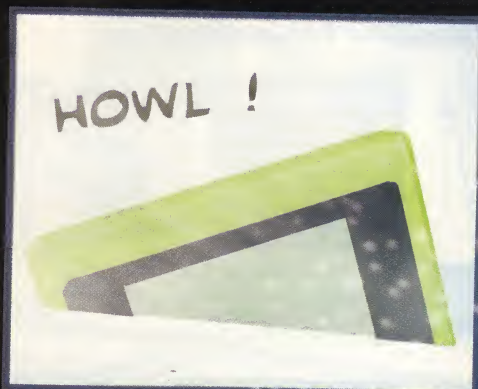
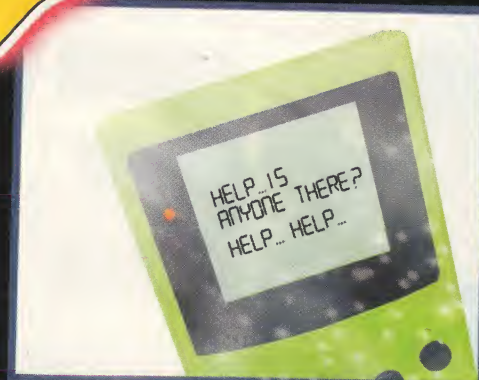
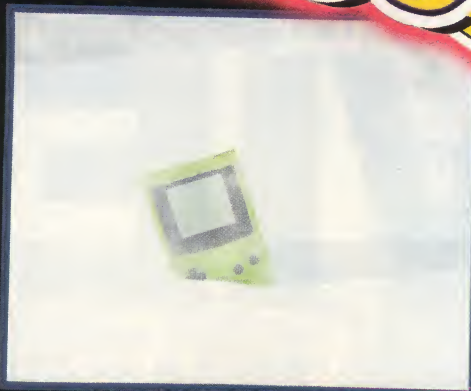
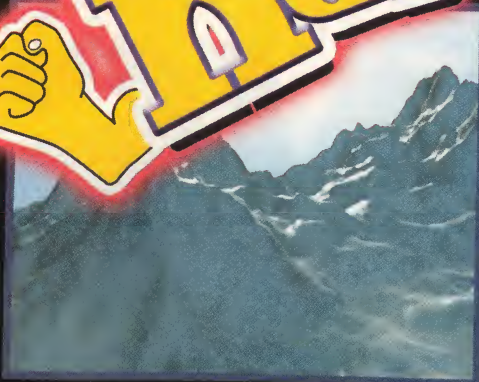
■ Offering the best multiplayer game on PlayStation2, this shoot-'em-up was one of the highlights within the glut of titles out before Christmas. Now at a respectable 13, *TimeSplitters* will provide ample funding for developers Free Radical's follow-up shooter.



GAMESTER

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ZING....

the end

REVIEWS



Back in 1987, if I remember correctly, CRL's *Jack The Ripper* made history by becoming the first game to get saddled with an official BBFC 18 certificate. Of course it was a publicity stunt rather than an attempt to protect the young and impressionable from the 'horrors' of Springheel Jack's murderous, monochromatic ZX Spectrum exploits, as the company's marketing people had insisted on the 18 rating themselves. It worked too, because the game sold far more copies than it merited, many of them to curious under-agers like me. So I suppose the bloodbath that is modern PC gaming can be traced back to that nifty bit of PR work, and the fact that most of my mates at the time showed forged IDs to the nice old couple who ran our local software shop.

The aptly named *Severance* has an 18 certificate too, but this time it's entirely appropriate. You can hack people into tiny pieces (after you've clubbed them unconscious with the wet end of one of their own severed arms), and the strangest thing about it all is the fact that it's actually quite funny. The phenomenally realistic graphics make a relaxing afternoon game of 'limb skittles' (with a goblin's head for a ball) all the more satisfying.

Since we've all been having so much fun with *Severance* (albeit probably not in the manner the game's designers had intended), we decided to break out an old favourite, *Soldier of Fortune* – the PC equivalent of a video nasty. If you haven't seen it before, you're missing out on something quite extraordinary. As far as I'm aware it's the only game to feature realistic exit wounds, which is some selling point. If your aim's good enough, you can shoot both legs off an enemy soldier (or, if the mood takes you, a civilian) and vapourise his head before he hits the ground. Remarkable.

Seriously though, I wonder if CRL had any idea what they were about to unleash. Only one of this month's six PC games doesn't feature fairly realistic, close-up killing, and that's because the combatants are tucked up in giant atomic robots.

Soldier of Fortune is on its way to Dreamcast very soon... ■

Martin Kitts, Reviews Editor

TEAM OF REVIEWERS

The most knowledgeable gamers in the business...

NICK JONES



■ Nick was lucky enough to land the plum job of reviewing *Final Fantasy IX*, which displeased The Jenx no end. Fifty hours of pixie-slaying later, Nick's in monkey heaven.

TIM WEAVER



■ Chirpy he may be, but Tim's a bit of a dark one inside. Turn to page 32 to witness some of the atrocities he performed on the goblin population of the ultra-violent *Severance*.

MARK GREEN



■ Look at that face. Those boyish good looks. Greener wouldn't hurt a fly, right? Wrong. This month he grew a gut-churning goatie and gave *Batman* a terrible kicking.

MIKE JENKINS



■ Mike 'The Jenx' Jenkins: This month you will be reviewing some truly awful games. But to sweeten the pill, how about a few laps on the brilliant *Moto GP*, the best game on PS2?

LEE HALL



■ Looking like the bastard offspring of Vic Reeves and Janet Street-Porter, Lee spent the month down a coal mine in Newcastle. We still made him play *FIFA 2001*, though.

RICH DELLEY



■ 'Dick Smelly' – or 'Mr Smiles' as he likes to be called – enjoyed the tips task we set him this month (see the results on page 82). In fact, it almost made him laugh. Almost.

NEIL RANDALL



■ To keep in shape while waiting for a decent DC game to turn up, we gave Neil a copy of *Quake III* to play with. Then *Aqua GT* arrived in the office. We gave it to Mike, of course.

KATE LITTLE



■ Hockey-loving Kate's probably the only member of the team with any sporting talent, which is why we felt compelled to inflict *Burstrick Wake Boarding* on the poor girl.

ALAN MADDRELL



■ When he's not posing in front of the mirror in his Y-fronts, pretending to be The Rock, Alan enjoys nothing better than sharing his unrivalled knowledge of *WWF Smackdown 2*.

LINDA HARRIS



■ Linda's a fan of poorly conceived puzzle games. At least that's what we thought she said, so we locked her in a dark room with a PSOne and a copy of *The Bombing Islands*.

THE REVIEW

Your guide to our reviewing system...

SCREENSHOTS

■ Ours are the best in the business, giving you a clear idea of how a game looks.

FORMAT

■ We'll make it simple for you to see which format the game reviewed is on.



CONTROLS

■ We'll immediately make it clear how hard or easy the game is to play.

THE SCORE

■ See below for further details, but we also take into account Gameplay, Presentation and Value.

UPPERS AND DOWNERS

■ Giving you a quick overview of the best and worst aspects of the game.

THE VERDICT

What the scores actually mean...

Rarely will a game score 10. When it does, it'll be because it's one of the top three games on its system.

10

A rich, remarkable, extensive game, pushing the envelope in terms of ideas and implementation. Stunning.

9

Standout and exciting, a game that scores this highly will be supremely playable and an essential purchase.

8

Entertaining and representing excellent value for money, this may even show sparks of originality.

7

Good, if not exactly outstanding or revolutionary, a six suggests some interesting but flawed game design.

6

Average. A competent game that won't be anything you haven't seen before done bigger and better.

5

A game that scores four will be entirely lacking in imagination as well as – crucially – frustrating and dull.

4

Into the realms of crushing disappointment, a three represents a game with some massive problems.

3

Utter rubbish. This'll seem to lack even the most basic grasp of what makes games enjoyable. Steer clear.

2

Horribly awful, this could hardly even be labelled a 'game'. You'd best avoid this like the plague itself.

1

**Video
Gamer
Recommended**

When a game scores a 7 or 8, we'll award it our 'Recommended' rating, meaning it's an excellent purchase.

**Video
Gamer
Essential**

When a game attains a 9 or 10, we'll hand it an ultra-rare 'Essential' award. This makes it an absolute must-have.

OUT NOW

Games reviewed this month...

FINAL FANTASY IX

page 024



Save the world and get the girl in this epic, fantastic adventure.

PlayStation

The Legend Of Dragoon 038

Ultimate Fighting Championship 047

The Emperor's New Groove 054

Harvest Moon 056

Army Men Sarge's Heroes 2 058

The Bombing Islands 060

Burstrick Wake Boarding 061

Darkstone 061



■ **Legend of Dragoon:** The RPG that wishes it was Final Fantasy VII. Is it hot? Or not?



■ **Harvest Moon:** Farming and dating with the world's nicest PlayStation game.

PlayStation2

Moto GP 034

Donald Duck Quack Attack 036

Winter X-Games Snowboarding 042

Pool Master 051

Surfing H30 055



■ **Moto GP:** The first real 21st century racer turns out to be the best thing on PS2.

PC

Giants: Citizen Kabuto 028

Severance 032

Oni 040

Mechwarrior 4: Vengeance 048

Delta Force: Land Warrior 052

Theme Park Inc 060

Blair Witch 3 061



■ **Giants:** Three years in the making, the long awaited, genre-busting PC supergame arrives.

Game Boy

Hello Kitty's Cube Frenzy 050

Dreamcast

Aqua GT 046



■ **Hello Kitty:** Cubes and cuteness in this slightly bizarre handheld puzzler.

Nintendo 64

Batman Of The Future 059

OUT NOW

PLAYSTATION



■ Meet Vivi. He's a Mage – a dark wizard – and is the only character in the game who can cast attacking spells. Well show us yer face then...



■ Like its predecessors, *Final Fantasy IX* rewards the player with some amazing movies. In fact, it's more like an interactive movie than a PlayStation game. Gorgeous.

FINAL FANTASY IX

GAME INFO

The Role Playing Game returns to PlayStation one last time...



■ Publisher:
Square Europe
■ Developer: **Squaresoft**
■ Price: **£40**
■ Release Date: **Out now**
■ Players: **1**
■ Extras: **Memory card, Dual Shock analogue**

Video Gamer Recommended

Engrossing, epic, poetic and boring: four words that describe *Final Fantasy IX* perfectly. It has all the hallmarks of a great game. Terrific presentation, great story, a ton of stuff to see and do and the undoubted potential to take over your life. But there's one problem – for the uninitiated, large slices of this mammoth gaming experience are, frankly, tedious.

You might think that this was a sequel, number nine in fact, but you'd be wrong. It's actually part of a series, a series where every game is a separate Fantasy, a self-contained adventure where the characters and the story are totally different from one instalment to the next. Or at least that's the idea. In reality, every *Final Fantasy* game is almost exactly the same. Here's the formula: make the lead character a young boy with problems – either he doesn't know who he is or he's misunderstood by his peers



■ As your characters grow they learn increasingly powerful attacks.

(usually both). Then you need a love interest: a princess is always good but she doesn't fancy the lead character (or at least doesn't admit it) until the love triangle is introduced. This involves another female character that worships the lead character and makes the princess realise her true feelings. Set all this against a background of saving the world



■ Typically outlandish creatures stand in your way. Their motivation is never explained...

from certain destruction and you've got yourself a *Final Fantasy* game.

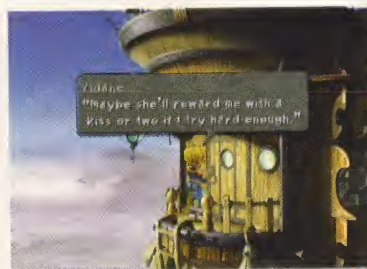
And so it goes with *Final Fantasy IX*. The young boy in question is a guy called Zidane (his real parents rejected him), the princess is called Garnet (she's not a real princess) and together you have to save the world from the ever-so-slightly effeminate but deeply evil Kuja, your archetypal villain on a massive power trip. Naturally this doesn't happen straight away – if it did the game would be over in a few hours rather



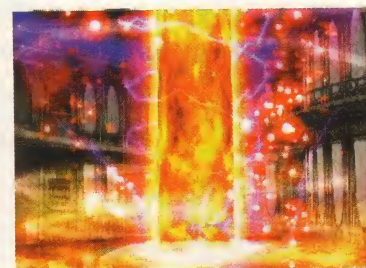
■ Boss characters are generally easier to beat than in previous games.



■ Random battles are a pain but vital for building up characters' experience.



■ Much time is spent reading dialogue. Too much time by our reckoning.



■ Magic attacks look better but aren't always as powerful as physical attacks.

A BIT ON THE SIDE

If you get a little bored of the main quest or just fancy a break for a few hours then there are a number of side quests for you to have a go at.



Stellazio coins

■ Hidden throughout the *Final Fantasy* world are these rare coins. Collect them for ? and she rewards you with some special prizes.



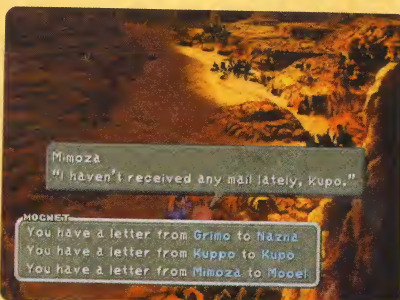
Jump rope

■ Early in the game you can play this old playground favourite. If you're any good, you'll get a prize.



Chocobo adventure

■ This massive quest takes hours to complete – first you have to find the clues (in the form of photographs) and then locate the treasure itself.

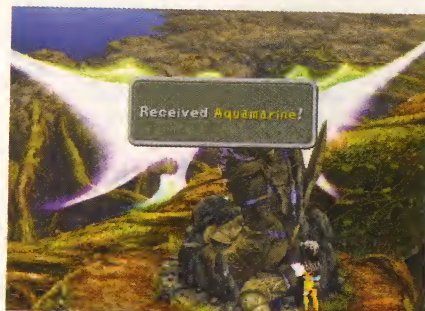


Mognet

■ Your challenge here is to deliver mail to each of the different save Moogles dotted around the world.



■ Prepare to grimace at some of Zidane's chat up lines. He's no Peter Stringfellow...



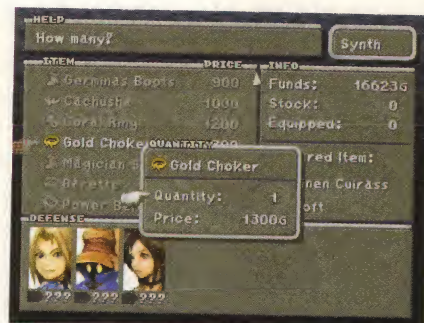
■ Only two characters can use Summon spells so choose party members carefully.

than the 60+ that it took us to complete it. Instead, the plot meanders from place to place and from situation to situation – this enables each of the game's characters to go on a journey of discovery and sort their problems out. Yawn. So, if you've played any of the other *Final Fantasy* games then you'll get a definite feeling of déjà vu.

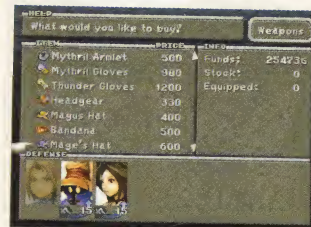
This isn't necessarily a bad thing; it just depends largely on if you manage to empathise with the characters. Fortunately, this is made pretty easy by some good Japanese character design. It's hard not to like Zidane the thief (he's also a boy-monkey) and his compatriots like Vivi the Black Mage, who bears more than a



■ The dramatic cut-scene movies give *Final Fantasy IX* a really magical feel.



■ The Synth shop enables you to combine items to make new weapons and armour.



■ Special abilities and magic are attached to armour or weapons.

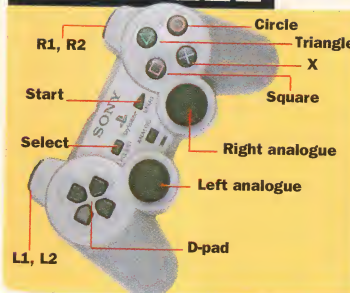


■ Some of the locations have been lifted straight out of *FFVIII*.



■ Anyone familiar with the series will be aware of the over the top magical effects. In this area, *Final Fantasy IX* won't disappoint.

CONTROLS



WHAT DOES WHAT

Circle » Exit vehicle
X » Activate/select/enter vehicle
Square » Call Moogles (save)
Triangle » Menu
Analogue » Movement
D-pad » Movement
Start » Pause
Select » Help
R1/R2 » Rotate camera

passing resemblance to a Jawa, and Steiner the dedicated but misunderstood knight. The excellent translation avoids the trap that most Japanese games fall into when they come over here, namely laughably literal translation. This helps enormously to convey emotion and character without any speech and it even manages to be funny at times. It's not Shakespeare, but rather an entertaining comic-style story with characters' emotions represented in a rather simple, but attractive, manner.

Looks-wise, *Final Fantasy IX* eschews the two previous games' cyber punk style in favour of something more traditional, like a Tolkien novel. Gone are the laser guns and the spaceships and in their place are magical castles, flying ships and silver dragons. And it *does* look good. In fact, it looks absolutely stunning – paintings rather than the usual computer-generated backgrounds have been used and the cut-scene footage is quite incredible. This is rather handy because if you want



■ Queen Brahme in all her obese glory. She's Garnet's mother and your enemy. But she's just one of many more enemies you come across...



■ There are loads of little sub-games to play as you travel through the world. In this bit, you get to take part in a auction.

» to be pedantic about the whole thing, there isn't that much of a game in here. Like the last two games, *Final Fantasy IX* is more interactive movie than game and as such has a very linear structure. Thankfully there are a number of side plots that you explore if and when you feel the need for a break from the main game.

If you haven't played one of the *Final Fantasy* games before, then they work like this. There are two main parts to the gameplay: the story parts and the fighting



■ One major change is to the Guardian Forces, or Eidolons as they're now known in *FFIX*, spells that call on powerful gods to do your dirty work. For starters, their animations are not as long and you don't get access to these spells until quite late in the game. This forces you to learn how to use the less powerful magic properly.

PICK A CARD...

Like *Final Fantasy VIII*, *IX* has its very own self-contained card game. This game can be played against almost any inhabitant of the *Final Fantasy IX* world. Cards can be obtained by defeating monsters or performing special tasks. This has a similar appeal to *Pokémon* and collecting each and every card in the game is a task in itself – and one that could take you a week to do. The card game works like this:



■ 1. To begin the game, cards are selected from your collection.



■ 2. Players then take turns to place cards on a 4x4 board.



■ 3. If cards with arrows are laid adjacently then a battle occurs. The loser's card turns to the colour of the winner's card. The winner of the game is the one with the most cards of his colour at the end.



■ 4. The winner of the game gets to choose one of his opponent's cards or if a 'perfect' is scored (all cards are turned the winner's colour) then he gets to keep all the cards that have been used.

parts. In the story parts you generally explore towns, cities, woods, temples and so on, solving puzzles and talking to inhabitants. It's all good fun. Then there are the fighting bits or Active Time Battle as developers Square like to call it. Here the game cuts to a battle scene, your team against the attacker.

Each team member (you can have up to four) has a time bar. When this reaches the top you can do a move: attack with a weapon, cast a spell or use an item.

Compared to the over-complicated system in *FFVIII*, this is much easier to use and understand. Each character has different specialties: Zidane's a thief and the only character who can steal objects

from enemies. Vivi is a Mage (a dark wizard) and the only character that can cast attacking magic such as Fire spells. Garnet, being a 'good' Mage can cast white magic such as Cure to heal your team. In previous games, all characters could use magic and any skill could be equipped to anyone, but

FFIX's specialised characters makes team selection much more tactical.

Another notable difference is a change to the use of Guardian Forces or

Eidolons as they are now known. These are huge spells that call up giant and powerful gods to do your dirty work. In *FFIX* they are less powerful (but you can call on them as much as you like during battle) and the animations are mercifully shorter. Also, you

The story has more twists and turns than a Hitchcock film...





■ The Black Mages have been manufactured by Kuja to be his slave army. Vivi is one of these Mages, causing him to ask the question: "Who am I?" It's all very deep, in a comic book emotions kind of way.



■ The battle system has been tweaked to make it a bit more straightforward and characters are more specialised.

don't get to use these until well into the second disc, forcing you to learn how to use the other magic properly, and saving some of the best visual treats for later.

However, the random battles (every 30 seconds or so you'll get into a fight) that plagued every other *FF* game are still in place. They serve the important function of building up characters' experience in learning new abilities and increasing their health and magic powers. But, in reality, they're just plain annoying – especially when you're trying to explore an area for the first time or just go from A to B. This problem is alleviated somewhat later in the game with the introduction of various vehicles to get you around the sprawling world of *FFIX*, but it's still irritating.



■ An exclamation mark shows when there's something of interest, saving you time.



■ Vivi and Steiner can team up, giving Steiner special magical sword attacks. However, casting magic spells costs you points.

But if you can put up with this, then *FFIX* is a great game, without equal on PlayStation in terms of role-playing games – except for maybe *FFVII*. The story is gripping and has more twists and turns than a Hitchcock film, the characters are great and it's one massive, seamless adventure. Playing through the game will take nigh on 60 hours, but if you want to find all the hidden extras and bonus games then you're looking at 100 hours of gameplay. That's great value for money. There's nothing here that will convert non-RPG fans to the genre but devotees will absolutely lap it up.

So there you have it. *Final Fantasy IX* comes highly recommended, though not entirely problem free. ■

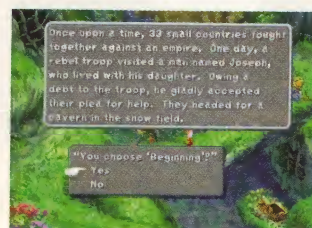
Nick Jones



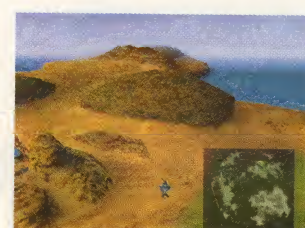
■ Spells and monsters are elemental – fire spells work well against ice creatures.



■ Many of the boss battles are scripted and form part of the story.



■ *Final Fantasy IX* is more puzzle-orientated than previous games.



■ Random battles make exploration prohibitive.



■ The Eidolons play major roles in the story as characters in their own right. Part of your quest is convincing them to join you.

Gameplay	9
The tried and trusted <i>Final Fantasy</i> formula remains largely intact so that's good and bad.	
Presentation	7
Terrific characters, animation, graphics, music and movies. A fantastic-looking game.	
Value	8
Massive adventure with 60+ hours of gameplay. Will take you weeks to complete.	
Verdict	8
Hugely enjoyable but also frustrating and boring at times, <i>Final Fantasy IX</i> is an epic adventure that will take weeks or months to master. One of the best-looking PlayStation games ever.	

↑ uppers

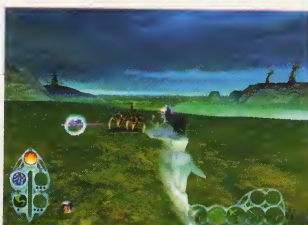
Spellbound

- It's huge
- Great characters
- Good story

↓ downers

Hell bound

- Tedious 'soul searching'
- Long periods with little to do
- Random battles



■ The amount of graphical detail you'll see depends on the kind of video card you've got in your PC. The game works best with the latest generation of Nvidia cards (as used in Xbox).

GAME INFO

[illegible]

Video Gamer Essential

The plot is suitably unhinged. You start the game playing Baz the Mecc, a Cockney alien stranded on a mysterious planet. Your first priority is to find your four lost friends, and the only people who can help you do so are the Smarties, a distinctly ungrateful race of grey midgets. By aiding the Smarties



Until this point, the game appears to be a relatively straightforward blast, but once the group is reunited, it becomes a little more strategy-biased, with a base to build and maintain, and simple resources to manage. After that, when you think you're equal to anything the game can throw your way, you take control of Delphi, a rebellious Sea Reaper, with a completely different set of moves and tactics to learn. And following Delphi's levels, a final plot twist sees you playing Kabuto, an enormous creature that flattens forests and eats Sea Reapers, Smarties and Cockneys with equal relish.

Delphi is more powerful, thanks to a set of impressive magical attacks and the ability to regenerate her health while in the water, but she can't defend as wide an area as the Meccs. The strongest of the lot, however, is Kabuto. When you're playing as the colossal beast, every other creature can be squished underfoot or turned into a live snack. Once you've eaten enough, you can



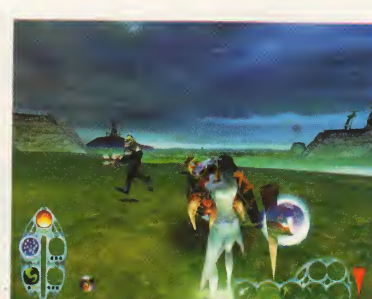
■ Delphi can carry up to five different magic spells at one time.



■ You can control Kabuto's offspring by clicking the mouse on them.



■ Mecc jetpacks are the most pleasant way to view the spectacular scenery.



■ Up close, Delphi's sword makes a highly effective weapon.



■ Don't spend all your time admiring the pretty sunsets.



■ The camera zooms out when you've collected all five Meccs.



■ This is another Kabuto offspring, and it's just a little closer than we'd like to see. When it rears up, it reveals a weak spot on its belly.

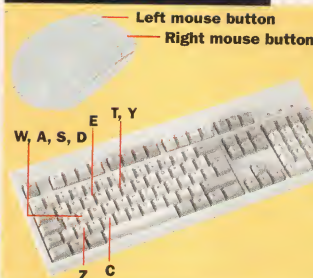


■ When Delphi's cursor turns green it means she can warp through the air at high speed – a very useful move when you find yourself bogged down in the midst of a swarm of angry Sea Reapers.



■ Meet Kabuto. When playing as the Big Man, it's always a good idea to have a healthy snack to hand – in this case, Kabsy's caught himself an impressionable young Marilyn Manson fan.

CONTROLS



WHAT DOES WHAT

Mouse » Look around
W, A, S, D » Movement
E » Zoom mode
Z » Zoom in
C » Show map
T » Chat to team
Y » Chat to all



■ These pretty boys yield health power-ups when you kill them.



■ Taking out the barracks is the only way to stop the enemy.

also poo out smaller versions of yourself and send them scavenging for more edible goodies. Which is nice.

As well as the excellent one-player mode, which should take a few weeks to play through, there's an online multiplayer game in which you select your preferred race and aim to wipe out everybody else. It's more tactical than most of the solo game. The early stages of each battle are spent collecting Smarties to construct a base, then either mounting a surprise attack or

consolidating your defences depending on how lucky you're feeling. There are loads of weapons to choose from, and you can even drop gun turrets at strategic locations,

controlling them from the safety of your command centre. If you play as Kabuto though, you can just stomp all over the place and

create havoc. The only tactical decisions you need to make are which race to eat next, and how many offspring to excrete.

In terms of looks, *Giants* is impressively stylish. The locations – mainly hills, plains

It's impressively stylish. Locations have a sense of other-worldliness

and desert islands to begin with – look quite familiar and realistic, but with a sense of other-worldliness. Subtle splashes of glowing pastel colours at the base of a mountain, a strange rock formation that looks like it's been sculpted from marshmallow, and vibrant greenish-tinted sunsets create beautiful vistas that could almost have been taken from a sun-bleached *National Geographic* cover.

The view stretches out forever, so it's possible to fly to distant villages that appear as tiny dots on the horizon, or investigate what lies behind a far-off mountain ridge. The ability to see an entire level at once, with no loss of detail, plays an



PC



■ This natural arena is the ideal location to build a base. Unfortunately, this ill-tempered bull appears to have first dibs on it.



■ Look closely and you can just about make out the tiny Sea Reapers scattering before Kabuto's size 10,000s. There's no escape, insects.

» important role in determining your tactics for the game. You will need to fly to the highest peaks in order to sneak a look at the enemy base, and certain hills make ideal sniping positions.

Of course, all this is assuming the graphics hardware in your PC is up to scratch. *Giants* will run on a fairly modest setup but you'll have to turn off much of the visual detail to get it moving at an acceptable rate. There are plenty of settings to play with, ensuring just about any recent



■ At its heart, *Giants* is a shoot-'em-up. It delivers huge weapons, enormous waves of enemies and lots of satisfying squelchy explosions.

GOOD CITIZENS

You'd have to be blind to confuse the game's three races for one another, let alone mistake the bulbous-headed Smarties for anything else. Still, here's a quick guide to the quirky world of *Giants: Citizen Kabuto*.



■ Kabuto is the top dog around these parts. Nice line in live snack food too.



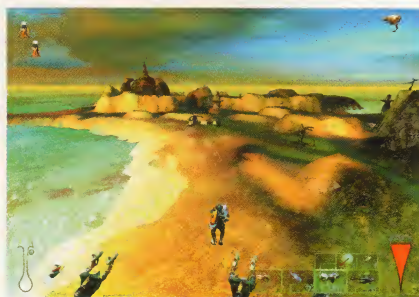
■ Delphi's costume is designed to disarm enemies with a devastating show of T&A.



■ Meccs look like slugs in spacesuits but they're Cockneys through and through.



■ Smarties are the industrious workers who build bases, eat Vimps and get shot at.



■ It's a lovely day to spend messing around on the beach, killing Sea Reapers and stuff.



■ Rippers will follow you wherever you go, through water and even up the sides of hills.

PC will be able to handle it, but the last thing you want is to have distant parts of the map cloaked in darkness – this makes a huge difference to the game's speed on a slow PC, but will hamper the gameplay. *Giants* is as good an excuse as any to invest in a newer video card.

Giants is a quality package. Brilliantly designed, easy to play, and with a dark sense of humour, all of its disparate gameplay influences hang together to create something quite outstanding. An early contender for best game of 2001. ■

Martin Kitts



■ Break out the sniper rifle and you'll be able to pick off enemies on that distant ridge.

↑ uppers

Giant

- Amazing visuals
- Unique missions
- Great multiplayer

↓ downers

Miniscule

- Needs a powerful PC to make the most of it

GAMEPLAY

Packed with great ideas and unusual missions. Lots of freedom to play your own way.

9

PRESENTATION

Sounds great, and amazing to look at. If only all games possessed this kind of visual flair.

9

VALUE

Plenty of solo missions and an unusual multiplayer. Makes a change from *Quake III*.

8

VERDICT

A wonderful mix-and-match concoction, stealing bits from various games and producing something that's much more than the sum of its parts. And well worth buying a new video card for.

9

IF YOU DON'T
LIKE FOOTBALL
YOU'LL HATE



THIS IS FOOTBALL 2™

But if you do, you'll love it. "This is Football 2" is the product of an all-consuming passion for the game, it's the real thing with real players, from your favourite superstars to playing with jumpers for goalposts. This is simply football at its best.

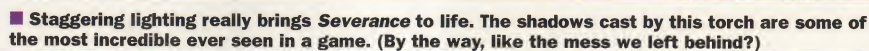
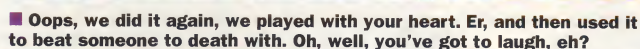
'Coming out to play then?

DO NOT UNDERESTIMATE
THE POWER OF PLAYSTATION



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GAME INFO

PC CD-ROM

SEVERANCE

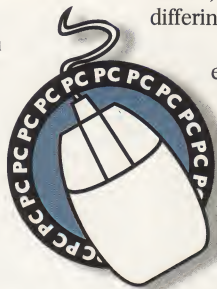
BLADE OF DARKNESS

E

Codemasters

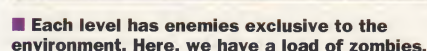
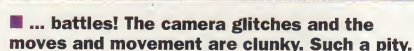
DESIGNED BY TONY

With four characters to choose from, the game purports to offer four very different adventures, but in fact only succeeds in creating four



It's hard to emphasise just how gory *Severance* actually is. If it had guns in it, *The Daily Mail* would have enough to fill a year's worth of editorial, but as our heroes are scrapping it out in the Middle Ages, they 'only' have access to swords, maces and speciality weapons like the Eclipse, a lengthy blade that allows for extra-accurate mutilation, and the Death Sword, which is so large it has to be dragged along the ground. Squeals of pain-filled anguish add to the effect, as do amusing squishing sounds, making the whole process of beating someone to death with *their own leg* (did we mention you can use severed body parts to fight with?) all the more enjoyable.

■ The game looks so remarkable that it's a crushing disappointment when you get to the...





■ The game has a mind-boggling list of potential combos – but you have to build up your levels of experience before you can pull them off. This, at least, adds an interesting exploration angle.



■ The camera does at least allow you to swing around and take in the glorious locations.



■ One other great thing: you can see for absolutely miles – right up to the rooftops!

lying helpless on the ground is easy enough, actually *killing* the game's impressive variety of enemies is less simple. Direction is poorly handled, with your character clunky and slow to change line and, even worse, plagued by an inability to finish moves quickly enough so that you're still fighting thin air while your adversary has already shifted position (and, worse, begun to lay into you). The result is that the game's huge list of *Tekken*-style combo moves go virtually unused, as *Severance* never really allows you to *progress* as a player in terms of ability. A lock-on helps a little, but it's less efficient than the one used in, say, *Zelda 64*, and becomes

The environments are ambitious, while the lighting is incredible

particularly useless when there's more than one enemy, as it seems uncertain which foe to focus on. What compounds this is that the camera really isn't conducive to fast, fluid fighting. When the action gets intense, the camera moves around in blocks,

juddering annoyingly from one point to another and never really sitting comfortably enough for you to effectively – and rewardingly – connect your building-

sized sword with an opponents' neck. Which is something of a crusher, as built around this problem are some of the most beautiful visuals you're ever likely to see in *any* game. The environments are ambitious, while the lighting is *incredible*, especially when you're pelting around with a torch (the fire effects are staggering). The rousing soundtrack and heart-stopping sound effects add to the atmosphere too.

But because the fighting doesn't work, the *game* doesn't work. Puzzle-solving and exploration do little to help its cause – largely because neither is particularly effective – while the platforming is frustrating and cumbersome, less adequate than even the flawed *Tomb Raider*. Which leaves *Severance* as a gorgeous, gory but ultimately insipid adventure. ■

Tim Weaver



■ There are four different characters to choose, and each start at different places.

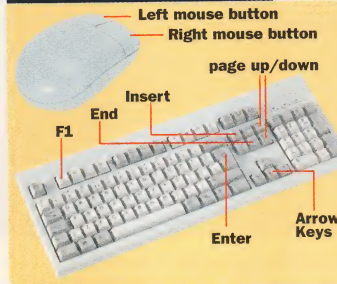


■ The sound effects are good: you can hear enemies squealing...



■ ...and talking. Then, eventually, you'll see them appear.

CONTROLS



WHAT DOES WHAT

Mouse » Look around
Left mouse button » Action
Right mouse button » Jump
Arrow keys » Walk/strafe/
 Combination moves
Page Up/Down »
 Select weaponry
Insert » Select shields
End » Put weapons away
F1 » Moves screen
Enter » Select



■ When there's one enemy, there's not such a problem with battles.



■ When there's more than one, it becomes impossible to be precise.



■ One upside of the clumsy battling is that, once you've administered some hurt, you can then administer some more to their bloody corpses.

Gameplay

Simplistic hack 'n' slashing, flawed battle system, but top body part removal.

5

Presentation

Absolutely stunning: jaw-dropping locations, amazing lighting, and an evocative soundtrack.

9

Value

Rock hard and, in places, immensely good fun – but disappointingly linear and problematic.

6

Verdict

Awesome to look at and sporting an enjoyably vicious streak, *Severance* is handicapped by cumbersome, frustrating controls and clumsy platforming. Disappointing.

6

↑ uppers

Sword play

- Stunning visuals
- Immensely bloody
- Great atmosphere

↓ downers

Bored play

- Horrible battle system
- Clumsy platforming
- Sparse scenery

OUT NOW

PLAYSTATION2



■ Looks beautiful, plays like a dream. This isn't a replay, this is your bike actually in action. Whichever game view you use, it looks brilliant.



■ Notice the lap counter? On Hard setting, winning the longest races is extremely difficult and you'll have to ride almost perfectly to finish first.



■ Secret character K1: cool bike but difficult to win.

■ A touch too much and it's spills galore. Looks neat, though.



CONTROLS



WHAT DOES WHAT

Circle » Change music
X » Accelerate
Square » Brake
Triangle » Change view
Left analogue » Steer
D-pad » Steer
Start » Pause Screen
Select » Change screen display

MOTO GP

GAME INFO



Publisher: Sony
 Developer: Namco
 Price: £40
 Release Date: February 16th
 Players: 1-2
 Extras: Memory Card, Dual Shock

Video Gamer Essential

Two-wheeled heaven arrives on PlayStation2.

This game is stunning – jaw-droppingly so. Yet it has a fight on its hands if it's to get the recognition it deserves.

Why? Simply because it's based on those things with two wheels – Superbikes, (500cc Superbikes to be precise) – and we all know how much boy racers love their motors. But put aside any four-wheel bias and you'll rejoice at just how good this is.

As soon as you see *Moto GP* in action you just can't help but be gobsmacked by how good it looks. Gorgeous, solid, photo-realistic, the verbal accolades could go on but the obvious point is that it's easily the best-looking console racer to date. And yes, that does include *Gran Turismo 1 & 2* and Dreamcast's *Ferrari 355 Challenge*. Perfectly complementing the

excellent visuals are spot on sound effects and fairly decent background tunes. Of course, as with all videogames with this kind of lush presentation, the all important question is does *Moto GP's* gameplay match its sensory excellence?

Indeed, it does. However, don't expect to jump on the saddle and immediately start carving up the corners like a professional. There are no handbrake turns to get you out of trouble, neither can you take the inside line of a curve using the outside car/scenery to bounce your motor around the bend (as car racers usually enable you to do), and drifting is strictly out of the question. No, *Moto GP* is true to bike handling, requiring you to nail the racing line at the right speed if you're to master its tracks. There's margin for error, but nothing like you'll find in, say, *Gran Turismo*. But it's

not *that* difficult, it simply means you have to take a while getting used to the way the bikes handle. Once you do start nipping past the opposition with knee-scraping excellence, or deftly chucking the bike down left and right while zipping through a chicane, the rush is unequalled in any serious racer we've played.

Another reason why the gameplay's so exhilarating is that there's 21 riders on the track at all times in a competitive race (excluding the two-player), so there's always someone to overtake, which is what makes racing games thrilling in the first place. When you eventually manage to whizz past all and sundry due to your expert skills and find yourself way out ahead on your lonesome, it's time to put Arcade mode on Hard setting. And then it does get tough – *really* tough. The gameplay's the same, but the riders are vastly improved, and from the tenth placed rider on, they fight tooth and nail for their

replay rapture

This game simply has the best replays we've ever come across. These are just a smattering of the many neat aspects of *Moto GP's* Replay Theatre. You can save an entire race if you like – even hour long jobs – and that's what you get to see in the replay.



■ Dramatic angles and camera shake...



■ ...then zoom in for some awesome detail...



■ ...pan back to display glorious scenery...



■ ...add tons of neat touches like heat haze.



■ This isn't you, it's the guy in front. As you're about to pass they look over their shoulders.



■ The undulating tracks really give a sense of climbs and descents, which is pretty ace.

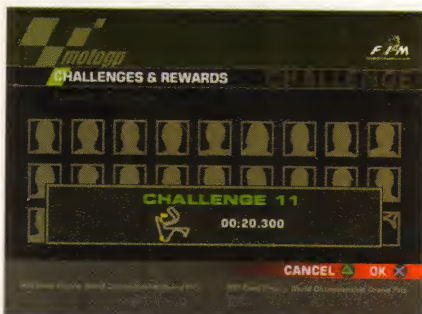
position. Even when you've done the business on them they don't give up, slacken the pace just a tiny amount and they fire straight past you. Which leads to edge of the seat races that provoke a whole gamut of emotions ranging from immensely satisfying please-let-me-win photo finishes to tough as hell, incredibly gutted get-out-of-my-freakin'-face loses.

And those races can be near hour-long tests of stamina, or a quick couple of laps around the circuit in any of the competitive modes. Besides the straight ahead racing of Arcade mode, there's the Season option where you compete over five seasons and

the excellent Challenges. In fact, pretty much all your wish lists are catered for here. The only real gripe we have about *Moto GP* is that the Simulation option doesn't really work because even when you use the analogue throttle, the back end slips away like it's on grease. But you need never use it in any of the five modes, so it doesn't actually spoil anything.

Whether *Moto GP* achieves the success it deserves will depend a lot on gamers nurtured on car racers seeing past their bias. We say get over it, get on it, crack the throttle and have the ride of your life. ■

Mike Jenkins



■ Many of the challenges are similar to *Gran Turismo's* licences and really hone your skills, helping you master difficult parts of the tracks. Plus you get a reward. Result.



■ Once again, not a replay. So where's all the dials and stuff? Use Select to clear the screen so all you have is the open road. Fantastic.



■ First-person view and the scenery looks gorgeous. Of course, there's no time to sit back and admire the vista – check the replays instead.



■ You will never tire of the replays. NEVER.

Gameplay

Slick as you like, and immensely satisfying once you've mastered the bike's handling.

9

Presentation

Glorious detail and absolutely jaw-dropping replays. Sounds are spot on, too.

9

Value

A little short on courses but the gameplay is so damn fine you'll always go back for more.

8

Verdict

Leaves all PlayStation2 racers in a cloud of dust and only *Gran Turismo 3* is likely to give it a run for its money in the near future. Do yourself a favour, ditch four wheels for two.

9

↑ uppers

Gravel rush

- Lovely bike control
- Stunning visuals, top sounds
- Smart Challenge mode

↓ downers

Gravel rush

- Simulation setting needs a tweak
- Not enough tracks
- Your bum gets really hot!



■ Usually you follow collectables – in this they lead you to doom.



■ Take a hit and Donald goes a bit 'mental', attacking everything.



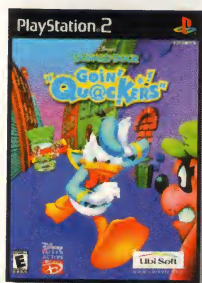
■ A sideways level – the camera fails to show you what's next.



■ All your Disney favourites are in here. Above, the bank robbers.

DONALD DUCK: QUACK ATTACK

GAME INFO



■ Publisher: **Ubisoft**
 ■ Developer: **Disney**
 ■ Price: **£35**
 ■ Release Date: **Out now**
 ■ Players: **1**
 ■ Extras: **memory card, Dual Shock 2**

Disney's duck hero fowls up on PS2.

Half-inching ideas are all very well if you make the most of them. And with *Donald Duck: Quack Attack*, Disney have attempted to reinvent the 2D Mario games from the early 90s, giving them a lick of cartoon-coloured paint and crossing them with fun PlayStation platformer *Crash Bandicoot*... but then forgetting to include *anything* – not one single thing – that made Mario and, to a lesser extent, *Crash* so good.

After sitting through some nonsensical story about Daisy Duck being kidnapped, you realise you have to collect

the scattered parts of a teleport machine to get you into the lair of the bad guy. Unsurprisingly, though, this is just an excuse to have Donald running around – not very convincingly – collecting things.

Actually, this isn't only *crossed* with *Crash Bandicoot*, it's an outright *copy*, particularly with its psuedo-3D look. The difference is that the *Crash* games had a few neat ideas, some clever little sub-games and interesting boss characters. *Quack Attack*, quite simply, doesn't. It has three types of level – the 'run into the screen' bits, the 'run sideways' bits and the 'run out of the screen' bits – each a perfect example of how platform games *shouldn't* work.

Your objectives are pretty straightforward – jump on platforms, jump on the heads of bad guys, collect things, get to the

end of the level. It's an excitement-free zone. A few years back this was just about acceptable, but on PlayStation2, the world's most powerful console, it's not. If the less potent N64 can produce *Mario 64*, surely the PS2 should be able to do the same? But, of course, Disney aren't Nintendo, and Donald Duck isn't Mario.

Most crushingly of all, apart from its dreadfully tedious gameplay, *Donald Duck: Quack Attack* also suffers from bad level design. This occurs in the '3D' levels where the camera has a habit of hiding you off the screen so you can't see where your character is. To add insult to injury, the camera also moves around too quickly, making control of Donald difficult and the chances of you coming a cropper that much higher. And it gets worse: objects that will harm you are often placed just out of view so you only notice them when you're half way through a jump and it's too late – and



■ That's Donald in the middle and some other duck dudes either side. If you're over the age of nine you're unlikely to know. Or care.



■ Avoid the eggs and jump on the big chicken. This and many other un inventive bosses await.



■ Not at all like *Crash Bandicoot* is it? Well, actually they've even copied the level select.



■ In principle, there's nothing actually wrong with jumping from platform to platform and collecting lots of shiny gold things but *Donald Duck: Quack Attack* just doesn't do it very well. At all.



■ *Quack Attack* doesn't reward the player for having good hand-eye coordination – instead it's a case of trial and error to succeed.



■ The 'into the screen' levels have you running away from a giant floating hand.



■ Yes, all the usual platform clichés are in here. Above, a level set in a haunted house.



■ Looks easy enough, but with a camera that seemingly moves randomly it can be a chore.

some harmful objects just look like scenery. Well, we don't need to tell you how infuriating *this* is.

Aside from this, *Donald Duck: Quack Attack* is a good game. No, only joking. It's *abysmal*. You have to wonder how people can get away with this kind of thing. Is there actually a *market* for it? How many 'kids', after all, have managed to get hold of the £300 PlayStation2 in the

It's unoriginal, it's badly designed and it's absolutely zero fun

run up to Christmas? And, in any case, even sub-ten-year-olds won't fall for this old rubbish. Sorry, but the age-old

argument, '...but it's for the kids', that's used time and time again when trying to justify yet another shoddy platformer, just doesn't do it

anymore, especially with *Mario 64* already showcasing 3D adventuring at its pinnacle (and that's *four years old*). Okay, so we don't expect a game of that quality every month, but *Mario* should be the benchmark for developers of games in this genre. Maybe then we wouldn't get muck like this.

Donald Duck: Quack Attack is unoriginal, it's badly designed and worst of all it's absolutely zero fun to play. The only real challenge you'll have from it is resisting the temptation to smash your joypad into a million tiny pieces in sheer frustration. Take our advice: if you're desperate for Disney fun then make use of that PlayStation2 DVD player and get yourself a copy of *Toy Story 2* or *A Bug's Life*. ■

Nick Jones



■ Collect parcels to give Donald extra health or more cogs. It's innovative stuff.

CONTROLS



WHAT DOES WHAT

X » Jump
Square » Attack
Left analogue » Movement
D-pad » Movement
Start » Pause

↑ uppers

Duck
■ Okay graphics
■ Quick loading times

↓ downers

Dive
■ Bad level design
■ Monotonous gameplay
■ Bad camera views
■ Crap characters

GAMEPLAY

Woefully designed, tired, unimaginative and relentlessly easy. In a word... rubbish.

2

PRESENTATION

Acceptable and colourful, but this might as well be the Dreamcast only half trying.

5

VALUE

Unless you're some kind of sado-masochist, there's little incentive to play.

2

VERDICT

Lacks any kind of originality and suffers from some shocking design flaws. On top of this, there's irritating music and horribly annoying characters. One of the worst platformers we've ever seen.

2

OUT NOW

PLAYSTATION



■ As you fight, a SP metre fills and when it's at max an option will appear, enabling you to morph into your Dragoon alter-ego.



■ Unfortunately, you can't explore the areas between major locations as the game 'railroads' you in a direct line between the two sites.



■ Villages and cities are often huge and have a distinctive character. This one is reminiscent of Venice – you can only get about by boat.



THE LEGEND OF DRAGOON

GAME INFO



■ Publisher: Sony
 ■ Developer: Sony
 ■ Price: £30
 ■ On Sale in UK: Out Now
 ■ Players: 1
 ■ Extras: Memory card, Dual Shock

Video Gamer Recommended

Is this the role-playing game to cast a spell over *Final Fantasy*?

The Legend Of Dragoon wants so badly to be *Final Fantasy VII*. The blatant similarities could easily fill these two pages, and whether it's the fighting or the story, the references to *FFVII* appear throughout. And, with such constant reminders, it's not that easy to stop saying to yourself "this just isn't as good". Which is why you've got to give it a chance...

Following in the well-trodden path of traditional RPGs, there's plenty of walking and talking, opening chests, random battles, giving nasty creatures a kicking and generally fighting for the common good. Your party of seven have various motives for joining the quest as you track a silver-haired, black-clad man across the world to avert a cataclysmic disaster

(hmm... remarkably similar to *FFVII*). Main man Dart is a surly sword man that soon becomes the centre of a love triangle – another act of blatant *FFVII* plagiarism – but the story is engaging enough to keep you interested as to how the members of the cast progress, even if it isn't that original.

The fighting system is strictly turn-based (each of you has a shot at knocking off enemy energy) with three of your seven fighters stepping into the breach. In fairness, *Dragoon* does diverge somewhat from *FFVII* here in that weaponry generally takes precedence over magic – in the first half of the game at least. The majority of the characters have selectable physical attacks that require precisely timed button presses during the action to inflict damage – and this actually works better

than *FFVII*'s swipes and blows as it's more interactive. But the magical element is a bit of a let down. It's very restrictive, as you can't carry that many items (a maximum of 32), and you have to become a Dragoon to use the non-item magic.

Become a what to do *what*? Basically, individuals can change into winged fighting



■ Morphing into a Dragoon – element Light.



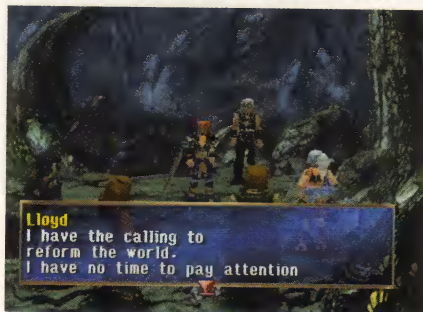
■ To continue multiple moves you have to nail each blow precisely by matching the squares.



■ In formulaic RPG style, the Dragoon with the Light element carries the major healing spells.



■ Rose in her Dragoon guise, dishing out a physical attack to a boss character.



■ Your nemesis – silver-haired, dressed in black, couldn't give a crap... sound familiar?



■ As you would expect, there's plenty of nattering to be done with the country folk.

Dragoons due to a magical stone that aligns itself with that person. Morph into their Dragoon alter egos and fancy magical spells ensue, along with stronger physical attacks (granted, a bit like *FFVII*'s Limit Breaks). Unfortunately, unlike the well worked physical attack system, magic in the game is generally a lacklustre affair – more Paul Daniels than Merlin. Oddly enough, though, due to the magic not really being very good the game is harder than *FFVII* (which is too easy by far) with abilities between your characters and enemies being much more evenly balance – this is good.

Dragoon's major disappointments come in two guises. Firstly, you can't really explore the open spaces of the huge world you're presented with. Instead, there's a simple path that 'rails' you from one location to another. The beauty of top-notch RPGs such as *FFVII* is that you can explore to your heart's content, hoping to

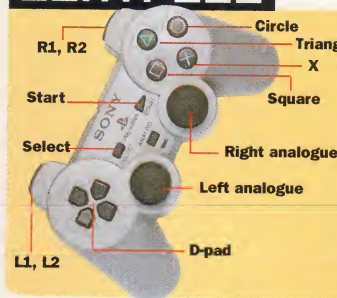
find secret places with special items, which creates a great feeling of discovery. There's just no sense of this in *Dragoon*.

Even more dissatisfying is the music, which is generally poor and often terrible. To cap it all off, the worst tunes are saved for when you have to fight. They not only fail to add to the atmosphere, they actually curb the excitement that may have been brewing. It's essential that a game like this has huge amounts of care and attention spent on it, so it's inexplicable and unforgivable that the soundtrack should be so awful, and seemingly knocked out without much thought.

But, while *The Legend Of Dragoon* never hits the dizzy heights of the game it so desperately wants to be, and certainly isn't entirely problem-free, it's a good, even *very* good, role-playing adventure that'll fill your spare time for weeks. Great stuff. ■

Mike Jenkins

CONTROLS



WHAT DOES WHAT

Circle » Counter blow
X » Action
Triangle » Inventory screen
Left analogue » Run
D-pad » Walk
R1 » Icon toggle
R2 » Map toggle
L1 » Icon toggle
L2 » Map toggle



■ The game's at its graphical best when visiting towns. The majority are pretty parcels of shops and houses that invite a spot of rummaging.



■ Bosses are made of sterner stuff than in most games. They often involve multiple enemies and their mode of attack varies considerably.

GAMEPLAY

Involving RPG fare with a neat combat system. A poor man's *FFVII*, but solid and enjoyable.

7

PRESENTATION

Awful tunes with looks that range from ropey to lush – especially the labyrinthine towns.

5

VALUE

Coming on four discs it's a huge undertaking – and easily worth the money.

9

VERDICT

Legend Of Dragoon has a number of annoyances, but you'll still want to get to the end of the final disc and for RPG fans, there are some cracking moments to enjoy along the way.

7

↑ uppers

Dragoons

- An involving turn-based fighting system
- Huge adventure
- Not too easy

↓ downers

Baboons

- Music is dire
- Visually scruffy at times
- Little that's original

PC



■ The first boss has an absolutely brilliant grenade launching laser shooter thing, which you should pick up as soon as possible.

■ (Right) When you've got more than one enemy to fight, special attacks are the best way to take them all out in a single move.



■ Warehouses aren't the most exciting locations, but at least there's plenty of space to try out a few explosive weapons.



■ Avoiding this evil brain-monster should test your mastery of Konoko's more athletic moves, such as the reverse flip and double jump.



ONI

GAME INFO



■ Publisher: **Take 2**
 ■ Developer: **Bungie**
 ■ Price: **£30**
 ■ Release Date: **Out now**
 ■ Players: **1-8**
 ■ Minimum specs:
Pentium III, 64MB RAM,
600MB disk space,
Nvidia-based graphics
card preferred

Video
Gamer
Recommended

Introducing the high-kicking, ball-breaking Konoko...

Ask *Oni*'s heroine, Konoko, about the weaker sex and she'll most likely give you a stern lecture on the danger of accepting stereotypes, before packing you off for a long-term stay in the nearest intensive care ward. Because although *Oni* hardly breaks new ground in terms of gameplay, it certainly doesn't follow the standard formula.

Konoko herself is possibly the least pneumatic game girl in the post-Lara world; *Oni*'s beautiful Manga-style artwork looks like the work of a top Japanese artist, but was created by Lorraine Reyes in the States; and in case you hadn't noticed, this isn't Namco's latest must-have beat-'em-up – it's for the PC.

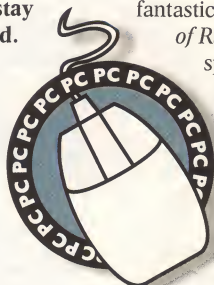
The third-person camera view makes the

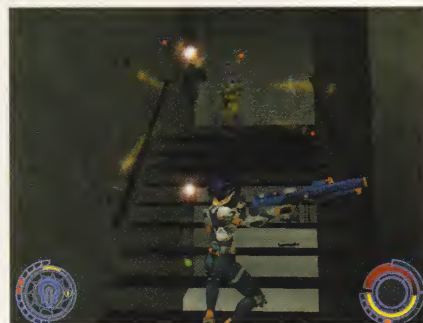
game appear superficially like any one of a number of similar titles, such as *Heavy Metal F.A.K.K. 2*, but it plays more like the kind of game you normally only find on a console, bringing to mind such classics as fantastic Sega Mega Drive scrapper *Streets of Rage*. The high-kicking Konoko sprints around the place, battering assorted villains into submission with a range of neat martial arts moves that become more elaborate the further you progress through the game's 17-or-so levels.

What normally hinders this type of thing on the PC is the fact that a keyboard and mouse makes a poor substitute for a joystick when you need quick, intuitive access to a number of buttons. *Oni*'s designers have countered this with a brilliantly simple

control system that allows you to fight multiple enemies with just four direction keys and the mouse. Push in the direction you want to attack, click a button and Konoko will break out the appropriate move – anything from a rugby tackle to bring down a fleeing opponent, to a bone-crunching throw. If somebody attacks with a gun, there's a particularly cool animation in which Konoko sidesteps the weapon, grabs the enemy's wrist and disarms him by making him elbow himself in the stomach.

You can use any weapon you find lying around, although ammo tends to be rather scarce. It's even possible to pick up the massive guns dropped by bosses – Konoko staggers under the weight of them. There's also a missile launcher which shoots a swarm of tiny, heat-seeking rockets (although most of them miss their target) and a stun gun which freezes people so you



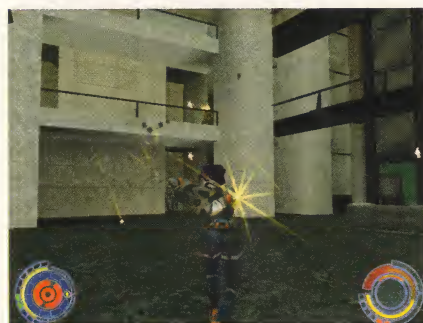


■ (Above) Multiple missile action from the bad guy on the stairs. Time to scarper, Konoko.

■ A visually sumptuous, action-packed romp through a cartoon world. Buy this game now.



■ Don't the guys with the red visors look a bit like extras from *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*?



■ Here's the lobby scene from *The Matrix*, complete with bullets and shattering glass.



■ Some guns have a built-in laser sight which makes aiming a whole lot easier.

can practice throws and holds on them.

The levels are big, calling for rather a lot of legwork. By following the compass in the corner of the screen it's easy enough to make your way to the next objective, but most of the time you just have to find the right switch to open a door. It isn't at all mentally taxing, and the empty parts of each level are only really there to give you a chance to stock up on goodies before you get embroiled in the next fight scene. There are some places where you'll have to jump from platform to platform, but thankfully these don't crop up too often.

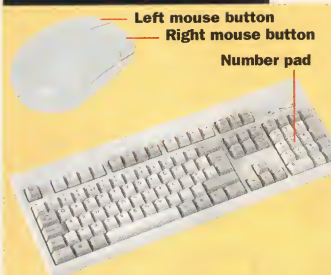
As you stray further into enemy territory in the later levels of the game, the enemies become tougher and more numerous. When you've got four or five of them

surrounding you, you will need the reactions of Bruce Lee to escape unscathed. One way to survive is by tip-toeing up behind lone guards and picking them off with special moves – so there is a *tiny* amount of tactical thinking involved.

But most of the time *Oni* is all about brawling, and it's a real heavyweight champ at what it does. It's the first game to make this kind of 3D fighting really work, and with the promise of a multiplayer version (which may be released as an add-on – it isn't present in this version) and a PlayStation2 edition, it's a rare treat for the many beat-'em-up fans who have waited eight years for a true next-generation successor to *Streets of Rage*. ■

Martin Kitts

CONTROLS



WHAT DOES WHAT

Mouse » Look, turn, punch and kick, plus an extra action modifier key for ducking, flipping and sliding if you've got a three-button mouse

Keyboard » Walk in four directions, jump, use item



■ We can't decide which anime movie *Oni* most closely resembles. There are bits of *Akira*, *Ghost in the Shell* and even *Perfect Blue* in there.

Gameplay

8

Many games have tried to do 3D fighting in the past. *Oni* is the first to succeed at it.

Presentation

8

Looks a treat, thanks to some outstanding character design and a Japanimation theme.

Value

7

Well worth coming back to for more martial arts action and, eventually, multiplayer fun.

Verdict

8

Slick, stylish and loads of fun, Konoko and *Oni* make a winning combination. The best beat-'em-up on the PC, and something sure to bring smiles to the faces of PlayStation2 owners.

ALSO ON

Oni will shortly be available on PlayStation2 – reserve your copy now. You know you want to.

↑ uppers

One and Oni

- Lovely graphics and artwork
- Simple 3D fighting
- Decent music and special effects

↓ downers

Crowded out

- There's never enough ammo for the weapons



■ Half-pipes make great places for racking up the points.



■ You can even adjust the angle your character stands on his board.



■ The weather and light change frequently to make each course feel completely different from the next. It's *that* realistic.

ESPN WINTER X-GAMES SNOWBOARDING

GAME INFO

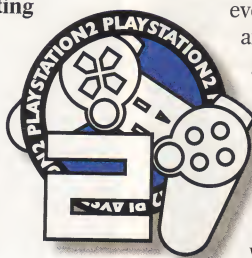


- Publisher: Konami
- Developer: Konami
- Price: £40
- Release Date: Out now
- Players: 1
- Extras: Memory card

Video Gamer Recommended

Snowboarding with a great big dollop of realism.

The PS2's other snowboarding game, *SSX*, is pretty good. It received a hearty 'Recommended' rating from us a couple of issues ago. It's a game that takes an arcade approach to the sport with the emphasis on fast, addictive, fun-packed play. The action takes place on courses designed for the maximum amount of stunts and it features cartoony characters and similarly unrealistic tricks. *X-Games*, on the other hand, takes an entirely different approach to snowboarding – here the emphasis is definitely on simulation.



You get two main modes of play, the first being a competition mode where you get to compete in traditional snowboarding events like slalom, big air jumps and half pipe. This is all well and good but it's incredibly difficult and probably best tackled when you've got to grips with *X-Games'* tricky control. The other part, and the best way to learn the game, is the Snowboarder-X mode, which works kind of like a role-playing game. Here you get to build a snowboarder from scratch – first you choose height, clothing and sex, then you give your virtual counterpart a name, and off you go to make a living from the slopes. You start off at the bottom of the ladder: your first objective is to make a bit of cash so that you can enter the competitions. An easy way to do this is by shooting a snowboarding video. Here you get four short courses to shoot your video on and

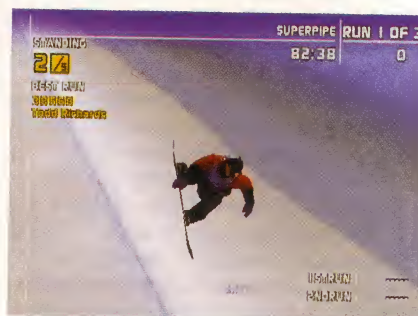
are given money according to the 'radness' of the stunts you pull off.

Once you have a few dollars, you can take part in increasingly difficult snowboarding events and buy yourself all manner of licensed snowboarding gear for your boarder: some of it improves your skills, some just makes you look good. You can also pay for helicopter snowboarding – the feature of *X-Games* that will have real snowboarders wetting their pants with joy. You see, *X-Games* has an entire mountain as a course. We're not just talking about one mountainside, with a few jumps scattered here and there, we're talking Mount Everest – this has to be seen to be believed. The helicopter rides take you to different areas of the mountain, drops you off and, well, then you're on your own. The whole mountain is yours for the boarding – you can go anywhere and do anything, it's completely open and quite refreshing after the confines of *SSX's* racecourses.

As mentioned, *X-Games* is a simulation



■ In one of the game modes you have to 'make' snowboarding videos. It's a shame then that you don't actually get to keep them.



■ Doing tricks in *X-Games* is probably more fiddly than it needs to be.



■ The 'adventure screen'. Just talk to the Lego men to access the different options.



■ Snowboarding as the sun sets. Notice how things in the distance are out of focus. Nice touch.



■ You have to make sure the angle of your board matches the ground to land safely.



■ You can't see it in a still image, but even your clothes ripple in the wind.

of snowboarding – to begin with, the tricky control system will put you off. But perseverance is rewarded with the satisfaction of pulling off a great trick and actually managing to land your boarder. This realism, however, does lead to a few problems. You can easily find yourself stuck either on a flat surface or behind a house because you only move on a down slope. And the huge

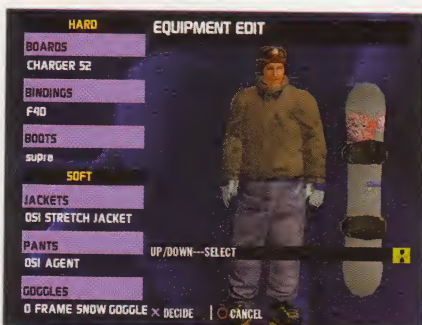
Perseverance is rewarded with the satisfaction of pulling off a great trick

mountain area is clearly modelled almost exactly on a real mountain so much so that there are huge areas that are extraordinarily barren and lacking in areas to do stunts. It can – and does – get boring. The flipside is that the smaller courses are well-designed and atmospheric, with plenty of stuff for you to unlock: courses and outfits for your boarder and snazzy snowboarding videos.

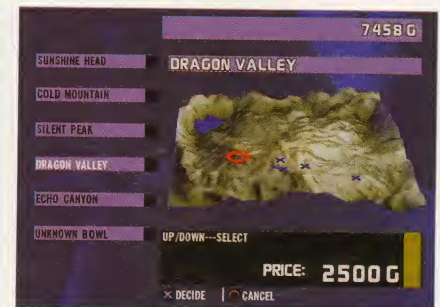
So if you like your snowboarding games then you've got a good choice on PS2. Either an arcade style game in the shape of SSX or this – something that's more of a simulation, which is probably better for the snowboarding connoisseur. *X-Games* has a steep learning curve but is ultimately very rewarding. It has great visuals (possibly some of the best yet on PS2) and manages to successfully recreate the feeling of snowboarding brilliantly.

So, while *X-Games* isn't essential by any means it's one of the better games on PS2 thus far. Buy it and be gnarly. Dude. ■

Nick Jones



■ Give your boarder a makeover – choose from boards, bindings, jackets, pants and goggles.

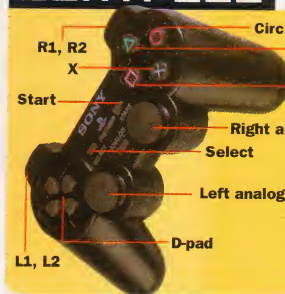


■ This screen enables you to pick which area of the mountain you'd like to have a go at.



■ Once the helicopter has dropped you off, you're free to go wherever you want.

CONTROLS



WHAT DOES WHAT

Circle » Grab
X » Jump
Square » Crouch/Grab
Left analogue » Movement
D-pad » Movement
Start » Pause
L1 » Change grab function
R1 » Grab



■ Replays are pretty comprehensive. Oh, and spectacular.

Gameplay

Emphatically realistic. Maybe too realistic for some – especially after the cool SSX.

7

Presentation

Looks great, sounds great but loading takes too long and some areas are barren.

7

Value

Potentially great with a huge mountain to explore – if you can put in the hours.

7

Verdict

Possibly too focused on realism, *X-Games* is a pretty difficult game – although ultimately rewarding. It doesn't offer the same thrills as SSX, but in its own way it's just as good.

7

↑ uppers

On piste

- Cracking visuals
- Great feel of snowboarding
- Massive open course

↓ downers

Piste off

- Really difficult
- Long loading times
- Takes ages to get into it



Release yourself from



from order and logic and enter a new place. It's not work. It's not home.

Here no maps have been drawn. No books have been written. Nothing is certain. Everything is possible.

WELCOME TO THE THIRD PLACE.



■ You may be looking at this two-player and thinking that it doesn't look too bad at all. You're right – until it starts moving. It's *sooooo* slow.

↑ uppers

Water tight

- Novel tidal system

↓ downers

Rising damp

- Barest of options
- Dodgy collisions
- Painfully slow
- Immensely boring



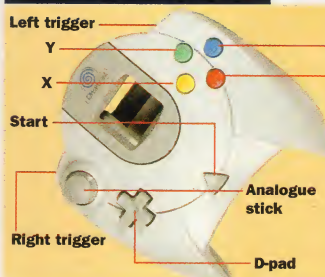
■ There's no denying that the German course is a beauty... now if we could only get this hunk of junk to go a bit faster.



■ (left) Look beyond the awful design of the menu screen and the idea works a treat – high and low tides really do change the way a course plays.



CONTROLS



WHAT DOES WHAT

A » Accelerate
B » Rear View
X » Brake/Reverse
Y » Change View
Left trigger » Gear down/kickdown
Right trigger » Gear up
Start » Pause
Analogue stick » Steer
D-pad » Steer

AQUA GT

GAME INFO



■ Publisher: **Take 2**
 ■ Developer: **East Point**
 ■ Price: **£25**
 ■ Release Date: **Out Now**
 ■ Players: **1-2**
 ■ Extras: **VMU**

Titanic... in the worst possible sense.

We're in Amsterdam and having no fun whatsoever. Impossible? Not when we're stuck in a plodder of a

speedboat in the extremely annoying *Aqua GT* it's not.

From the moment the disc whirrs into action you just know this isn't going to be fun. When the game's loading the VMU screen displays an egg-timer and you think they're having a laugh. They're not. You *could* boil an egg in the time this game takes to load up. Loading is frequent, long and irritating.

When you finally get to sit in your built-for-speed aqua mean machine it turns out to be as quick a 90-year-old in a canoe. Even when you open up the faster boats, the game rarely gives you that speed kick, that thrill of being on the edge. Instead you trundle along praying that something,

anything, will kickstart this stinker into something resembling entertainment. Occasionally, a nice touch crops up – such as the tidal factor that alters the height of the water – but before they induce any sense of pleasure to the proceedings, the game's ponderous pace sucks the life out of them.

Aqua GT is a game that needed a few extra months with the tweaking gurus. It looks pretty enough, some of the courses are memorable and the tidal system is a novel factor that works well. Yet the pitifully slow pace, dodgy collisions (where one boat merges into the next) and the barest of modes and options blows a hole right in the middle of its hull. Had enough time been spent sorting out its obvious problems, it probably would have been a half-decent game. As it is, it's slow and incredibly boring. Save yourself the pain. ■

Mike Jenkins



GAMEPLAY

You'll be searching for a long while to find anything remotely interesting or fun here.

2

PRESENTATION

The races look okay, the rest is as bland as dry toast. The few neat touches can't save it.

4

VALUE

You'll turn the air blue, throw the pad and never play it again... in that order.

1

VERDICT

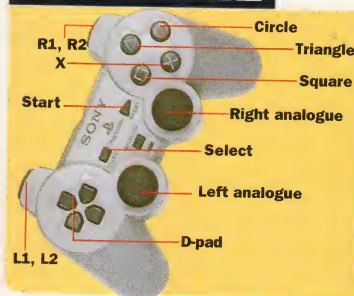
Ponderously slow, dodgy collisions and the frequently annoying ramming of the computer opposition grinds *Aqua GT* to a standstill. And there's not even a hint of fun to redeem it. Terrible.

2



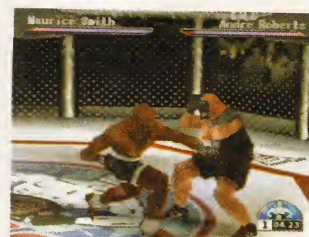
■ The fantastically named Jeremy Horn deals out some punishment to the world famous, er, Evan Tanner. A couple of seconds later, The Hornster got pushed to the floor and the game was over.

CONTROLS



WHAT DOES WHAT

Circle » Low kick
X » High kick
Square » Hook
Triangle » Punch
D-pad » Movement
Left analogue » Movement
Start » Pause



■ So, a switch of characters and everything feels so different...



■ ... actually, it feels exactly the same, regardless of fighter. Crap.

ULTIMATE FIGHTING CHAMPIONSHIP

GAME INFO



■ Publisher: **Ubisoft/Crave**
 ■ Developer: **Opus**
 ■ Price: **£30**
 ■ Release Date: **Out now**
 ■ Players: **1-2**
 ■ Extras: **Memory Card, Dual Shock**

Fighting with no rules, gameplay with no finesse.

As an idea, *Ultimate Fighting Championship* works. With its freestyle combination of wrestling, boxing, jujitsu and pub brawling, it takes the beat-'em-up template and offers more freedom to moves and combos – and chucks a hefty portion of violence into the mix.

But, to play, *UFC* is clumsy and tedious, and while some gorgeous visuals might have papered over the cracks on Dreamcast, there's no such luck here, with creaky looks doing very little to disguise a game that's short of *WWF Smackdown*'s personality,



and way short of *Tekken*'s implementation.

With 20-odd fighters to choose from – each specialising in one fighting 'art' (or a combination of all of them) – the game prides itself on having no rules, with relentless punches and kicks to the face and groin actively encouraged. But, there are problems – and plenty of them. There's no apparent learning curve for starters, with computer opponents pinning you to the floor and breaking your arm before you've even had a chance to blink. The result? No second chance, a quick replay, then game over. So, after sitting through the game's

long loading screens, you try again – and you're pinned down and defeated instantly. Eventually, you realise how to counter this using the game's moves list, but even when you do, your opponent just keeps blocking so you can't get any hits in.

Added to this is the problem of every character having the same moves – despite the fact they're supposed to have specialist skills. Subsequently, scraps are samey and unsurprising, lasting for ages as both fighters try to pull off their best move. Needless to say, the computer players always do and you always don't – and you won't even find solace with some multiplayer human-on-human fighting: it's crippled by the same flaws. Disappointing and incredibly frustrating. ■

Tim Weaver



■ Replay your best scraps with the twitching replay mode. Exciting? No.

↑ uppers

Fight Club

- Anything goes fighting
- Unintentionally funny fighter names
- Lots of moves

↓ downers

Fright Club

- No learning curve
- Impossible computer characters
- All moves are exactly the same

GAMEPLAY

Plenty of moves, but spoilt by a lack of learning curve and unbeatable computer opponents.

3

PRESENTATION

Animated nicely enough, but looks scruffy, and sports more menu screens than is legal.

5

VALUE

Better when computer opponents aren't involved, but it's not a game that'll hook you.

3

VERDICT

With the excellent *WWF Smackdown 2* in the shops as well as *Tekken 3* on PlayStation, there's no need to invest in *UFC*. Not quite rubbish, but problematic, flawed and frustrating.

3



■ See off an enemy Mech and watch the beautiful pyrotechnic display. *Mechwarrior's* world is pretty convincing with its lavish visuals and brilliantly atmospheric soundtrack.



■ Missions can be played in the day or at night – tougher, but you get the element of surprise.



■ Using the zoom feature, you can take out enemies from a long range.



■ Best not hang around when Mechs explode. Get caught in the blast and you're toast.



■ Some weapons are best used up close. Best to soften up the enemy from long range first.

All in all, it's an immersive experience, with some nicely atmospheric radio chatter and objectives that alter during missions as circumstances and situations change around you, giving you a terrific sense of taking part in a real, full-on battle. Not that we'd even claim to know what that's like, of course.

But there's this awful nagging feeling that you're not playing anything that you

You get to control up to three team-mates at once by issuing orders

haven't seen before, especially if you're a war gaming veteran. Which is a shame, because with a little bit more imagination, and if *Mechwarrior 4: Vengeance* hadn't have been so by the numbers, then it really could have been a standout title. As it is though, we're left with a

decent, involving game that's just lacking that little spark of originality. ■

Nick Jones

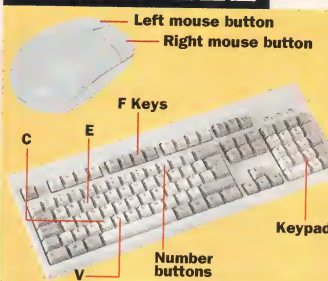


■ It's all very atmospheric – note the mist in the low areas on this level.



■ Give your Mech the right paint job and he'll blend into the lush landscapes with ease.

CONTROLS



WHAT DOES WHAT

Keypad » Leg movement
Mouse » Body movement
E » Change target
C » Crouch
V » Change view
F Keys » Issue commands
Number buttons » Walking speed
Mouse buttons » Fire weapon groups



■ Gives you an idea of how impressive the landscapes can be. You'll need a kick-ass PC to get the best results, though.

Gameplay

Solid if uninspiring stuff – the missions could have been a bit more inventive.

7

Presentation

Fantastically huge worlds but it's let down by dodgy menu screens and acting.

7

Value

Lots of missions to play and there's a decent multiplayer in here. Decent value for money.

7

Verdict

It's well put together, has some great visuals and will last you ages. Shame that the story is rather boring and there's little imagination in the gameplay – *Mechwarrior 4* could have been amazing.

7

↑ uppers

R2D2
 ■ Great visuals
 ■ It's tough
 ■ Big robots

↓ downers

K-9
 ■ Too many controls
 ■ Not very original
 ■ Terrible story and acting

Video
Gamer
 Recommended



■ This level's pretty tough because the items you need to collect are suspended high in the air and Badtz-Maru causes chaos on the ground.

■ Can you tell what your next move should be? Confused? That's hardly surprising.



CONTROLS



WHAT DOES WHAT

- A » Rotate blocks one way
- B » Rotate blocks the other way
- D-pad » Slide blocks left or right
- Start » Pause
- Select » Go back through menus and Hello Kitty's storybook

HELLO KITTY'S CUBE FRENZY

GAME INFO



- Publisher: Ubi Soft
- Developer: Torus Games
- Price: £25
- Release Date: Out now
- Players: 1
- Extras: None

Puzzling fun with the world's cutest cat.

We like a tale of triumph against the odds. Despite being capable of only one facial expression (slightly bemused), Hello Kitty's position as the most loved feline in Japan, ahead of more versatile performers like What's Michael and Doraemon, fills us with underdog-admiring pride.

The impossibly cute, easy-to-draw cat is finally set to hit the big time in this country too, so it looks like *Hello Kitty's Cube Frenzy* has arrived at exactly the right moment. It's a puzzle game (which comes as no surprise on the Game Boy) with an interesting twist: instead of just matching up blocks to make them disappear, you have to place them around the screen to create platforms for a tiny Hello Kitty to climb on.

The aim is to help Hello Kitty collect gems and fruit from around the screen.



Blocks fall slowly from the top, and you can guide them to form steps for her to wander up, or match blocks of the same colour to get rid of unwanted ones. Throwing more than a few spanners in the works are Hana-Maruk, Badtz-Maruk and Pandaba, three naughty-but-cute characters who affect the falling blocks in different ways and get quite angry if you brick them into a corner.

It's all very sweet but actually too hard to get to grips with. The blocks behave strangely, making it tough to guess which ones will fall when you remove the blocks supporting them, and Hello Kitty herself gets in the way just as often as the bad guys. Still, there are some cute backgrounds, and you win extra pages for a Hello Kitty storybook as an incentive for solving each level. There are better puzzlers on the Game Boy, but at least this one doesn't steal ideas from *Tetris*. ■

Hello Kitty

↑ uppers

- Hello Kitty**
- Not just another Tetris rip-off
- Brain-teasing puzzles

↓ downers

- Kitty litter**
- Tiny graphics are hard to see
- Confusing rules
- Too much Hello?, not enough Kitty

gameplay

Nice idea, but the blocks ought to behave more consistently – it just gets too hard.

6

presentation

So sweet it'll fit in just perfectly with any collection of Hello Kitty cuteness.

7

value

Tough enough to last for a while. Shame there's no two-player mode though.

6

verdict

Another decent handheld puzzle game. It's a whole lot more involving than it seems and even if it's not quite good enough to recommend to everyone, it's well worth having a look at.

6



■ Your choice of apartment doesn't affect the way the game plays, but it probably says a lot about your personality. Tasteful chrome staircase.

↑ uppers

Nice shot

- Very nice backgrounds
- Round balls
- Solid, realistic feel

↓ downers

Ripped cloth

- It's just pool
- Not exactly packed with extras



CONTROLS



WHAT DOES WHAT

- Circle** » Set power
- X** » Cancel
- Square** » Set spin
- Triangle** » Overhead view
- Left analogue** » Aim cue
- Right analogue** » Set power
- D-pad** » Aim cue
- L1** » Zoom in
- L2** » Zoom out
- R1** » Raise butt



■ The training mode will teach you everything from simple aiming to complicated jump shots and swerves. We're pool demons now, y'know.



■ Watch out for this girl. As soon as you miss, she pots every ball.



■ Nice camera angle, but it's obvious this shot is going to miss.

POOL MASTER

GAME INFO



- Publisher: Take 2
- Developer: Ask Co. Ltd
- Price: £40
- Release Date: Out now
- Players: 1-8
- Extras: None

**Video
Gamer
Recommended**

Welcome to the Minnesota Fats PS2 Training Academy...

Pool. If there was ever a game sure to fire the imagination of the average PlayStation2 owner, it's this. Walk into any pub or pool hall, any night of the week, and you can be sure the tables will be surrounded by the kind of 20-35 years old, cash-rich punters Sony's marketers are targeting.

So *Pool Master* looks like a guaranteed winner. It's by far the nicest-looking pool game we've ever seen, the physics are dauntingly realistic, and after a couple of sessions with the excellent training mode, your real life pool skills will improve no end (at least, if you're as bad to begin with as us). It's simple to play and very tough to master.

The controls are no more complicated than they need to be. You can use the analogue sticks or the more traditional

D-pad, depending on how confident you are, and the only other things you need to worry about are the amount of spin you want and the angle of the cue. By combining the two, you can make the ball curve and jump. It takes a few goes to get right, but it's much better that you make a mess of it on your PS2 rather than put a real cue through the cloth at the Severed Arms on a busy Saturday night.

You also get to play in your own choice of swanky apartment. Whether you go for a gothic mansion interior or a fully chromed-up, 21st century bachelor pad, all of the furniture is drawn nicely by the power of PlayStation2. And when you rack up a new game, the balls rise fluidly through the baize, exactly like the real things don't. Magic. ■

Martin Kitts



GAMEPLAY

Several variations on standard pool, plus trick shots, a training mode and friendly controls.

7

PRESENTATION

Great graphics for this sort of thing, and some seriously funky menu screens.

8

VALUE

It's the kind of game you'll play for half an hour to relax after getting home from work.

7

VERDICT

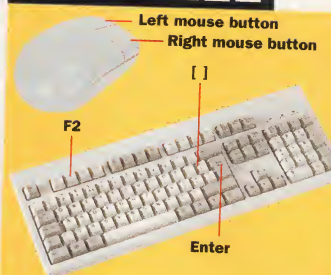
Good stuff. Yes, it's only a pool game, but it's a pretty thorough one. Easy on the eye and requiring no intensive brain activity, this is something you can stick on when you want to unwind.

7

PC



CONTROLS

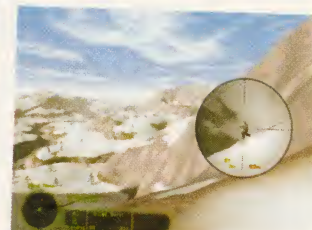


WHAT DOES WHAT

Left mouse button » Shoot
Right mouse button » Toggle sniper scope
F2 » Third-person view
Enter » Talk to other players during online games (only if you've got a compatible sound card and microphone)
[] » Adjust sniper scope zero distance (honestly!)



■ This is what we call, in the trade, a dead man walking.



■ With the scope, it's possible to hit targets over a mile away.

DELTA FORCE: LAND WARRIOR

GAME INFO

Round up 49 friends for an online war.



■ Publisher: NovaLogic
 ■ Developer: NovaLogic
 ■ Price: £35
 ■ Release Date: Out now
 ■ Players: 1-50
 ■ Minimum specs: PII-400, Direct 3D compatible graphics card, 64 MB RAM (with PCI card), 128 MB RAM (with AGP card), 500MB disk space

Although ploughing through an entire chapter of *Bravo Two Zero* in a single sitting is the closest most of us will come to experiencing SAS-style heroics, PC owners can sample life in the US Army equivalent with *Delta Force: Land Warrior*, the latest in a popular series of elite soldier simulators.

After selecting which kind of combative skills you want to specialise in, from close combat to sniper scoping, you'll be inserted as close to the danger zone as possible. Since you're part of a secret Delta Force team, you could find yourself in any

country in the world, carrying out Uncle Sam's good work by 'slotting' specific enemy targets, freeing hostages and sabotaging military installations.

The game is very much like the good-but-flawed *Project IGI*, which scored 6 out of 10 in last month's *VideoGamer*, and has its share of good ideas. Best of all is the sniper scope which zooms just a small portion of the screen, allowing you to move from target to target with ease, and is accurate for about a mile.

But *Delta Force* has its problems, mainly due to the enemy's lack of any sort of intelligence. You can shoot bullet holes in the walls next to soldiers, blast out windows or drop their friends, usually without getting the slightest reaction. When the soldiers do decide to make a move towards you, the stiff and limited animation makes them flick from prone to standing in an instant, spoiling the game's realism.

However, if you've got a very good net connection, you can have a full-scale war with 49 other players. It's a great option, and once you try it you'll never bother with the one-player mode again. Few gamers in this country have the cable modems required to get a 50-player game moving smoothly, but you can still play against 8-16 people without much trouble. When you've got that many involved, it can't be bad.

Better than average. ■

Martin Kitts



■ There's a good selection of varied missions.

↑ uppers

SAS
 ■ Big levels
 ■ Online battles
 ■ Sniper rifles

↓ downers

Dad's Army
 ■ Poor animation
 ■ Dumb enemies
 ■ A bit too easy

Gameplay

Lengthy missions, a brilliant sniper mode, and satisfyingly epic battles over the net.

7

Presentation

Nice scenery but the animation is dodgy and interior sections are rather simplistic.

6

Value

If you have a lightning-fast net connection, there's plenty of replay value to be had.

6

Verdict

Fast, reasonably enjoyable army action which is plainly not meant to be played alone. Consider *Delta Force* an online-only game and you shouldn't be too disappointed with it.

6



■ Make sure you don't go shooting your own team members in an online game. If you're playing alone, the computer controls the team.

going, going, gone-on-line.

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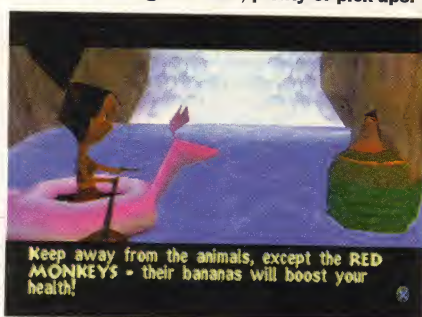
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■ Llamas aren't the prettiest of creatures, but then neither is the game. Still, plenty of pick-ups.



■ Simple platform puzzles litter the game.



■ Cut-scenes are funny in a kiddy kind of way.



CONTROLS



WHAT DOES WHAT

- Circle** » Action
- X** » Jump
- Square** » Charge
- Triangle** » Look
- Left analogue** » Direction
- D-pad** » Direction
- Start** » Pause Menu
- Select** » Quit
- R1/L1** » Rotate camera
- R2/L2** » Rotate camera

THE EMPEROR'S NEW GROOVE

GAME INFO



- Publisher: Sony
- Developer: Argonaut
- Price: £25
- Release Date: February 16th
- Players: 1
- Extras: Memory Card, Dual Shock

Can Disney break the PS platformer mould?

Mario 64 kicked off 3D platforming on N64 and not one single platformer since has even come close to bettering it. And PlayStation 3D platformers are particularly prone to being crap. So it's no surprise *The Emperor's New Groove* isn't going to send any tremors through the gaming world. But it's not quite as bad as it at seems.

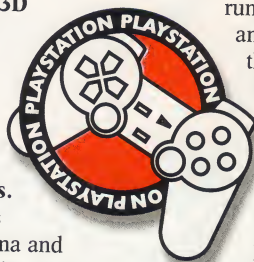
It's a Disney outing that sees the Emperor changed into a llama and your task is to get him back to the palace to sort out the man from the beast. So off you trot across the South American countryside with an arrogant llama in tow, intent on being rude to all and sundry. On a positive note, the game camera usually works well (commonly the bane of 3D platforming), plus the sounds and humour are typically Disney and will appeal to young gamers. The same can't be said for

its looks – simplistic and scruffy, with scenery seeming to pop out of nowhere. Devoid of anything remotely original, you'll see the familiar platform fare of running around picking up objects and coins with the odd task/event thrown in for good measure.

That's not to say it's done badly because it's not. It's just so formulaic that you know what's around the corner before you even clap eyes on it. It would be really nice for a platformer to surprise us once in a while but it rarely happens – and certainly isn't happening here.

Yet there is something strangely addictive about the *The Emperor's New Groove*. Its very simple gameplay and linear approach mean levels are completed fairly swiftly, which keeps things rolling along nicely. So it won't set your world alight but for kids it's a fair old romp. ■

Mike Jenkins



↑ uppers

- Groovy**
- Disney humour for the kids
- Sounds aren't too bad

↓ downers

- Gravy**
- Visually lacklustre
- Nothing original whatsoever

Gameplay

Nothing at all will surprise you but it's platform nonsense done reasonably well.

4

Presentation

Basic graphics but the sounds and humour do capture that childhood Disney charm.

3

Value

Very simple but probably engaging enough for the very young so they'll enjoy it while it lasts.

3

Verdict

Strictly for the young, *Emperor's* is a totally predictable romp through platform country that never evokes high levels of excitement but does its thing reasonably well.

4



■ Ah, no, see you've made a crucial mistake here: you've gone against the tide. That's fatal.



■ Select the board that you think will pass the test. (Hint: they're all exactly the same.)



■ You're on a different level because the water is a different colour. *Intensely* clever.



■ This is the game, then: turn the PS2 pad on its side, and slightly twitch the analogue stick from left to right. And, er, that's it. Honestly.

CONTROLS

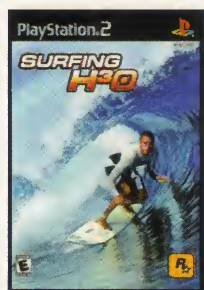


WHAT DOES WHAT

Left analogue » Mount board/Direction
Right analogue » Mount board/Direction
D-pad » Menu selection
Start » Pause
L1 » Tricks
L2 » Tricks

SURFING H³O

GAME INFO



■ Publisher: **Rockstar**
 ■ Developer: **Ascii**
 ■ Price: **£40**
 ■ Release Date: **Out now**
 ■ Players: **1-2**
 ■ Extras: **Memory card, Dual Shock 2**

Welcome to a whole world of water-based pain.

H3O, then. It's a *bit* like water but possibly a little more dangerous (though, seeing as it only exists in the minds of developers Ascii, we wouldn't like to say for sure). In the same way, *Surfing H3O* is a *bit* like a game but, in all honesty, not much. Indeed, this appalling attempt to do a *Tony Hawk's* on water is one of the worst games we've ever played.

In Japan, *H3O* came with a 'fingerboard', a device you could attach to one of the two analogue sticks and use to direct your surfer. Without it, the game becomes impossible to

control because – astonishingly – by default you have to push Up to go Left and Down to move Right. And for some reason, there is no fingerboard for the UK version so, as a result, *H3O* is a non-event, a game so annoying to play that you'll do well not to end someone's life by the time you've 'surfed' through the first level.

This is how the game works: you move forward *really slowly* with minimal interference from the analogue stick, you collect balls (for some reason), and you progress onto the next level. Which looks exactly the same except the water's a different colour.

There are tricks to pull off, but not many, and they're largely pointless because there's no scenery to use as there is in *Tony Hawk's*. If you go the wrong way, the game screams "Where are you going?" – which is quite appropriate because it'll probably be back down the shops to get a refund and an apology.

Surfing H3O is total crap: mind-numbingly tedious, shockingly designed and criminally awful to look at. Avoid. ■

Tim Weaver



■ Collect balls for no apparent reason other than... oh, no reason.



■ Visually *Surfing H3O* is pathetic – you just can't polish a dog turd.

↑ uppers

Boards

■ The fingerboard... which doesn't even come with this version. Oh dear

↓ downers

Bored

■ Hideous controls
 ■ Woeful visuals
 ■ Samey levels
 ■ Zero replay value

Gameplay

The computer moves you forward, the controls make it impossible to play. You fall asleep.

1

Presentation

Looks like it's had all of a couple of minutes lavished on it. Like a dire PlayStation game.

1

Value

Not worth thinking about, let alone playing or (shudder) buying. A lifespan of milliseconds.

1

Verdict

If this was the last game on Earth and you *had* to play it to save the world, it would still be pretty difficult to bring yourself to touch *Surfing H3O* with a barge pole. Utter dross.

1



Inside the houses you can talk to folk, buy things and rummage through their possessions.

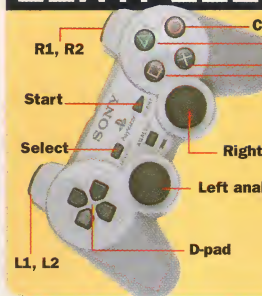


Bubba's snagged himself a free fishing pole.



The shopkeeper sells everything you need.

CONTROLS



WHAT DOES WHAT

- Circle » Run
- X » Pick up
- Square » Use tool
- Left analogue » Movement
- Right analogue » Nope
- D-pad » Movement
- Start » Pause and save menu
- R1 » Swap tool
- R2 » Swap rucksack item
- L1 » Whistle for your evil dog



"Well, hello kitty! Hows about I make you breakfast some time..."

HARVEST MOON: BACK TO NATURE

GAME INFO



- Publisher: **Crave**
- Developer: **Natsume**
- Price: **£30**
- Release Date: **Out now**
- Players: **1**
- Extras: **None**



Kick back and relax on the farm.

How about this for an alternative lifestyle simulator: virtual farming. Which, in *Harvest Moon*, means mud, sweat, tears, money, love, mini-games, and the sweetest, most original RPG you're ever likely to see on PlayStation.

Your mission, which you'd be a bit of a fool not to accept, is to convert your late grandfather's ramshackle old farm into a state-of-the-art agri-business. Starting with nothing but a bag of seeds, some fairly knackered tools and the mind-boggling ability to wake at 6am and dig half a field by lunchtime, you'll know you've succeeded when the farmyard has everything from a snazzy greenhouse to a shedful of snot-bubble blowing cows.

It's hard work to begin with, especially if you get too caught up with the game's other objective: marriage. Wander around the nearby village and you'll eventually

meet five of the most eligible young ladies in the neighbourhood. Pick your favourite, bring her flowers, save your hard-earned cash to pay the local blacksmith for shiny trinkets and with a little luck you'll crown your three-year tenure on the farm with a blow-out wedding before judgement is passed at the final harvest festival, and the game comes to an end.

Even if finding a balance between working and socialising doesn't sound like the kind of thing you'd want to consider after another dull day at the office, you owe it to yourself to give *Harvest Moon* a chance. It's pure escapism, and there's no other PlayStation game quite like it. In fact, it could be the first time you turn off your console after a marathon gaming session feeling calm, relaxed, and maybe just a little bit more enlightened than when you started. Go on... you know you want to. ■

Martin Kitts



↑ uppers

- Organic**
- Loads of stuff to see and do
- Relaxing
- Rewarding
- Sharp humour

↓ downers

- Processed**
- Not quite as good as the USA-only N64 version

Gameplay

Lots of variety in a living, breathing game world. You won't get bored.

8

Presentation

Good music and slick graphics, particularly in the building interior scenes.

7

Value

Choose a different bride and no two games will ever be the same.

8

Verdict

Harvest Moon might not seem like an obvious choice, but with any luck, this previously Nintendo-only series will pick up some new fans among PlayStation owners. Brilliant stuff.

8

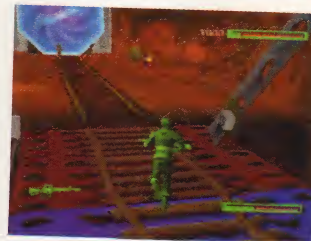


Totally obsessed?

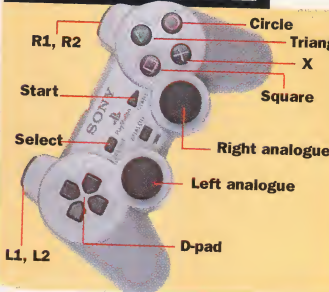
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PLAYSTATION



CONTROLS



WHAT DOES WHAT

- Circle » Weapons
- X » Shoot
- Square » Climb/Jump
- Triangle » Dive
- Left analogue » Direction
- D-pad » Direction
- Start » Pause menu
- R1 » Aim
- R2 » Strafe right
- L2 » Strafe left

ARMY MEN: SARGE'S HEROES 2

GAME INFO



- Publisher: 3DO
- Developer: 3DO
- Price: £30
- Release Date: Out now
- Players: 1-2
- Extras: Memory card, Dual Shock

Great idea, shame about the gameplay...

The *Army Men* series, where tiny plastic soldiers battle it out in their own atmospheric world, has been a multi-format success story. With the good Green Army taking on the evil Tan empire, the games have an original take on the war genre, boasting great characterisation and neat scenarios. Sounds good for *Army Men: Sarge's Heroes 2*, then? That's what we thought.

So many games have you screaming for one good idea. *AM:SH2* has plenty, so why are we still screaming? That would be the control system, then. It's utterly appalling. The collisions are laughable – your character gets caught in scenery even though visually he's miles away. If that isn't bad enough, he has the agility of a sloth, spooning around as though he's running on the spot. And just to make sure you *really* don't enjoy yourself, the camera response is hopeless, getting jammed on

scenery, swinging around so you see in every direction except the one you want.

Even more frustrating are the moments in the game that really carry out a neat idea, only to be spoilt by the controls and their lack of even the most basic subtlety in movement. Unsurprisingly, this totally ruins any attempt at something different. Take the sniper rifle, for example: if only you could peer around a corner and zing the Tan army, there would be an added stealth element. No chance. In the end you think to hell with it and run in with all guns blazing. And that's the tenor of *Sarge's Heroes 2*: simply

leg it in a straight line at the enemy and fire. Any other tactic isn't worth bothering with – the dodgy controls puts paid to that.

Training, Campaigns, Multiplayer, the mode makes no difference – it's abysmal. Great ideas, terribly executed. ■

Mike Jenkins



↑ uppers

- Green
- Plenty of good ideas
- Great atmosphere created by the link movies

↓ downers

- Tan
- Ugly as hell
- Frighteningly poor control system
- Camera causes a world of pain

Gameplay

Lots of nice ideas that are totally ruined by the appalling control system and shocking camera.

2

Presentation

A mixed bag of extremes: the movies look great but the game itself is very shoddy.

3

Value

Plenty of missions plus a multiplayer, if you can live with its substantial flaws, that is.

2

Verdict

This looks and feels as though it's been quickly knocked out for a fast buck – even though there are some good ideas here. If you're a fan of the series, be prepared to be gutted.

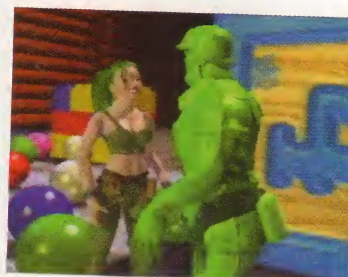
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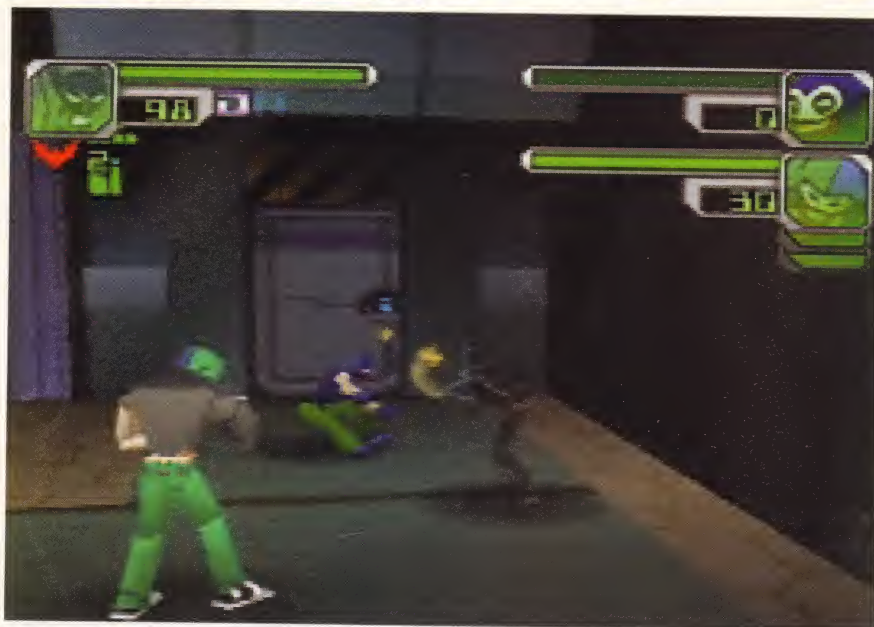
■ The dire controls mean even the two-player quickly becomes tedious.



■ Campaigns vary the number of heroes needed for the job.



■ The link movies create a great atmosphere... pity the game doesn't.



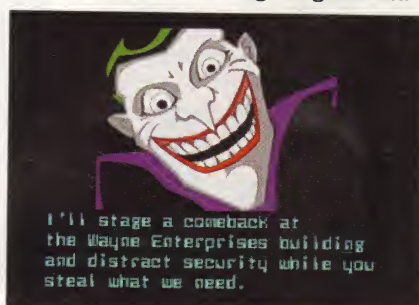
■ Just look at the 'quality' of those visuals. This is just about the worst-looking N64 game ever.



■ Leap gaps. Fight henchmen. Kick robots. *Batman* ignores twenty-odd years of videogame evolution to deliver some stunningly tedious play.



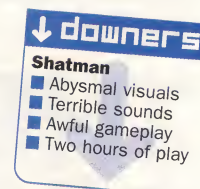
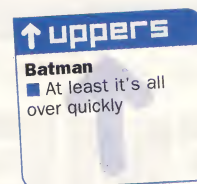
■ It's the end screen, which arrives after little more than a couple of hour's play. Shocking.



■ Yes – *Batman's* cut-scenes can do without the third dimension, thank you very much.



BATMAN OF THE FUTURE



GAME INFO



■ Publisher: **Ubi Soft**
■ Developer: **Kemco**
■ Price: **£45**
■ Release Date: **Out now**
■ Players: **1**
■ Extras: **Controller Pak**

There's nothing futuristic about this travesty...

And to think that some people moaned at Tim Burton for defiling the Batman legend. *Batman Of The Future's* unique interpretation of the beat-'em-up – old-fashioned, repetitive, ugly and criminally short-lived – must truly have original Batman artist Bob Kane somersaulting in his grave.

Based on the recent animated series, *Batman* sees newcomer Terry McGinnis donning the batsuit and kick-punching his way through ten levels of near-unbelievable tedium. Wave after identical wave of guards and robots trundle on-screen, mill about with all the intelligence of shopping trolleys, then bow to your pitifully limited inventory of leg and arm sweeps. And your reward for clearing a room? A key that unlocks the door to... another room, and wave after identical wave of guards and robots.



It's all reminiscent of the creaky *Final Fight* coin-op of yesteryear, a concept that was cast aside by developers years ago on account of its depressing rubbishness. No attempt's been made to vary the gameplay – aside from the odd inexplicably weedy weapon – only the four mechanical 'powersuits', which endow Terry with superhuman abilities, offer a sliver of excitement. Repetitive, banal backgrounds and laughably poor 2D cut-scenes only serve to make the whole package even more unpalatable.

After all that, the fact that *Batman Of The Future* can be completed in fewer than two hours – less if you discover the inexcusable 'one move defeats all' trick – is like the punchline to a particularly unfunny joke. We can't stress it enough: do not buy this, unless you enjoy the eye-watering nausea that comes with throwing away nearly £50 of hard-earned cash. ■

Mark Green

Gameplay	1
Right up there with rolling around naked on a tray of hot coals. Absolutely dire.	
Presentation	1
Chronically dull visuals that even the Game Boy would be ashamed to display.	
Value	1
For £5 less than <i>Zelda</i> , you get three hours of play so tedious you'll be close to suicide.	
Verdict	1
Tedious, unexciting levels, a very limited number of moves and bad presentation make for one shabby game. An absolute travesty of a beat-'em-up – not even worth checking out in passing.	

BURSTRICK WAKE BOARDING

■ Publisher: JVC ■ Developer: Metro ■ Price: £20 ■ Release Date: Out now ■ Players: 1 ■ Extras: Memory Card, Dual Shock



■ Apparently wakeboarding is what they call an 'extreme' sport. Heh heh. Extremely poor.



Well at least it tried, is the best thing we can say about *Burstrick*. It tries and succeeds in being something slightly different. But that, unfortunately, doesn't make it a good game.

Basically, you strap on a snowboard and go water-skiing, trying to avoid obstacles, jumping ramps and performing tricks. Yes, it's another one of those extreme sports that have crossed over to videogames. No doubt in real life it's a blast but here it's a damp squib. The poor graphics are forgivable as PS just doesn't seem able to produce the glorious water ways of something like N64's *Wave Race*. Poor control is less forgivable, however, and it's something *Burstrick* has in common with other poor performers this issue (*Army Men Sarge's Heroes 2*).

Strangest of all, maybe, is that while you steer the boarder and jump to avoid obstacles, the ramp jumps and tricks are performed automatically. Just line up the ramp jump, hit the front and the computer takes over. With tricks you input a code (similar to *Tekken* combos) and if you nail it, once again, the computer does the rest.

In short, they've taken the potentially involving aspects of wake boarding out of your hands and given them over to the computer. Bizarre. ■

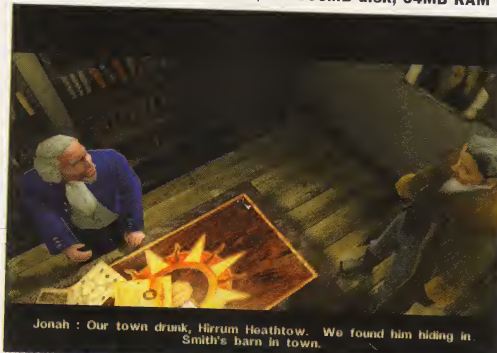
VERDICT

Slightly different, maybe, but it's a bit of a stinker that only allows you to control the most basic elements of wake boarding – and then, the little control you're given performs badly. Give it a very wide berth.

2

BLAIR WITCH 3: THE ELLY KEDWARD TALE

■ Publisher: Take 2 ■ Developer: Ritual ■ Price: £20 ■ Release Date: Out Now ■ Players: 1 ■ Minimum specs: 850MB disk, 64MB RAM



■ Characters rarely react, even if you whip out a pistol and shoot them in the head. Avoid this game.



Strangely enough, nobody here seems to recall seeing any zombies in *The Blair Witch Project*. Granted, we avoided seeing much of the flick by hiding behind jumbo tubs of salty popcorn, but we're sure the movie's budget wouldn't have stretched to the hordes of shambling undead that infest this final instalment of the *Blair Witch* videogame trilogy.

As such, it's about as far removed from the film that inspired it as this month's *Harvest Moon* is from *Ground Force*. The game takes huge liberties in expanding the origins of the witchy legend. Unsurprisingly, it's a sub-par *Resident Evil* clone, replete with monsters to blow away and forehead-smackingly simple problems to solve.

Rubbish graphics don't help, and the voice acting is of the standard you'd hear in a school play. Design-wise, it's a mess. After you've spent several minutes fighting with the awful controls in order to enter a new area, the last thing you want is to have to go back the way you came to search for some obscure item you missed earlier, yet this game does it time and time again. It has its moments (unintentionally comical) but is basically a shoddy cash-in on the fading *Blair Witch* hype machine. ■

VERDICT

The only thing this game has in common with the original movie is a bunch of those spooky stick-men dotted around the place. Would have been more scary if they had given the starring role to Scooby Doo.

3

DARKSTONE

■ Publisher: Electronic Arts ■ Developer: Delphine ■ Price: £30 ■ Release Date: Out Now ■ Players: 1 ■ Extras: Memory Card, Dual Shock



■ Chatting and slaying, chatting and slaying. But where's the fun? 'Nowhere my son,' said the innkeeper.



Darkstone's the third PlayStation RPG this issue but it's a different breed from *Final Fantasy IX* and *Dragoon*. Instead of the random battle world of those two titles, *Darkstone* comes from the walk-about-dungeons-and-hit-things stable – think of PC game *Diablo* and you'll not be far off.

You can choose between eight characters of four different types – the usual physical to magical biases well in place. Once selected, off you trot to save the world from a very evil man who has a disturbing knack of changing into a dragon. Obviously you'll have to kick some butt to take on such an adversary, so your character gradually increases their abilities via experience points gained by attacking enemies. Yes, you've heard it all before, no doubt.

The main problem with *Darkstone* is that while involving it never, ever, feels exciting. No excitement equals no fun equals a big fat dud, in gaming terms. Absolutely awful graphics doesn't help in endearing you to the game, but role-playing games are more about gameplay than looks, yet this fails miserably in both respects.

Even if you hate random battles, do yourself a big favour and get *FFIX* or *Dragoon* instead of this ugly beast. This could have only come from a parallel world where people think this is a game. ■

VERDICT

Darkstone looks shabby, feels worse and its battles are rubbish. In fact, this is possibly one of the worst role-playing games we've ever laid eyes on. Do yourself a favour and don't get caught mooching round its 'scary' dungeons.

2

It's here

OFFICIAL PlayStation 2 MAGAZINE



PS2

The only official
PlayStation 2 magazine
and the only one with
a playable demo disc

BRAVEHEART

■ From: Fox, £23 ■ Starring: Mel Gibson, Catherine McCormack, Patrick McGoohan, Sophie Marceau ■ Directed by: Mel Gibson ■ Certificate: 15 ■ Extras: Two theatrical trailers, director commentary, Making of... featurette

■ Mel Gibson's epic reworking of the William Wallace legend cleaned up at the box office in 1995, and won five Oscars including Best Director and Best Picture. Even English audiences adored it, despite the depiction of most southern types as treacherous, murderous scumbags who rightly receive a good hiding at the hands of the Scots.

The movie follows Wallace (Gibson) as, catalysed by the rape and murder of his childhood sweetheart, he unites the various tribes of Scotland to stand against the deeply unpleasant English King Edward Longshanks (McGoohan). The battle scenes are exceptional,

with a visceral realism only recently matched by *Gladiator*, and Gibson succeeds in bringing tenderness and emotion to what could, in less skilled hands, have become a three-hour excuse for a mediaeval gorefest.

Whether or not the English atrocities depicted throughout are historically accurate, you can't help but root for the underdogs, and the film's distressing climax thankfully pulls its punches in sparing the viewer from the full horror

of Wallace's fate. It's a must-see movie, and this DVD two-disc edition features a commentary track, a couple of trailers and a documentary explaining the origin of Aussie-American Gibson's fascination with this quintessentially Scottish story. ■



VERDICT

Beautifully shot on an epic scale and featuring a fine cast, *Braveheart* is a powerful story that will leave the first-time viewer reeling and has the lasting quality to make it a worthy buy on DVD. Highly recommended.

8

DOGMA

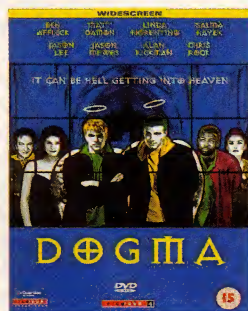
■ From: Film Four, £20 ■ Starring: Ben Affleck, Matt Damon, Linda Fiorentino, Salma Hayek, Jason Mewes, Alan Rickman, Chris Rock ■ Directed by: Kevin Smith ■ Certificate: 15 ■ Extras: Cast and crew interviews, teaser trailer, main trailer, UK TV spots.

■ Movies with a religious theme always stir up more controversy than any other genre, but when the film maker's none other than Kevin Smith, a talented director and comic book writer known more for his use of gross-out humour and strong language than his subtlety, it's no wonder the Catholic church did its best to prevent *Dogma's* US release.

Ben Affleck and Matt Damon star as Bartleby and Loki, two angels thrown out of Heaven and condemned to live among the mortals on Earth. They're well suited to their new life, being as imperfect as any of the humans they're forced to share the planet with, but when they discover a back

door that'll allow them to return to paradise and unwittingly bring about the end of the universe, Bethany (Linda Fiorentino) the last descendant of Jesus, joins forces with foul-mouthed drug-dealers Jay and Silent Bob (Jason Mewes and Kevin Smith) to save the world.

Dogma aims to challenge the establishment's blind acceptance of Bible texts. Yes, it's controversial in places, violent and packed with swearing, but it has a point to make, and backs up every assertion with reasoned and eloquent argument. Smith's a wonderful writer. It's just a shame that in this UK release we don't get to hear him explain himself via the commentary and hours of extras that fill the recent US special edition. ■



VERDICT

A thought-provoking film, without the belly laughs that characterise Smith's previous work. UK audiences are short-changed by the lack of extras – but you can get hold of a signed Region 1 import from www.viewaskew.com.

7

THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW

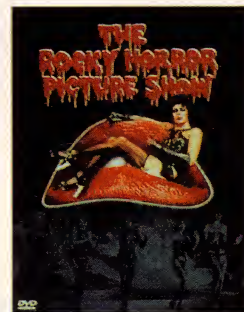
■ From: Fox, £25 ■ Starring: Tim Curry, Susan Sarandon, Barry Bostwick, Richard O'Brien, Patricia Quinn, Neil Campbell, Meat Loaf ■ Directed by: Jim Sharman ■ Cert: 15 ■ Extras: UK, US and 'secret' cuts, commentary, audience audio track and prompter, VH1 documentaries and interviews, deleted scenes, trailers, karaoke videos

■ You're lucky, he's lucky, I'm lucky... If you know the rest, you've probably already pre-ordered your copy of this 25th anniversary, two-disc edition of the enduringly bizarre cult musical that gave us the Time Warp, some sweet transvestites, and a classic title sequence with Patricia Quinn's disembodied lips singing along to Richard O'Brien's vocals.

The plot isn't important, as the songs and characters are the real stars of the show. As with all the best musicals, the soundtrack dates the movie, but it doesn't sound tired –

Richard O'Brien (of *Crystal Maze* fame) is a classy songwriter with a sharp turn of phrase, and those qualities have kept audiences returning to midnight shows at theatres everywhere for the past quarter of a century. Plus there's the small matter of having a reasonable excuse to dress up as your favourite character (usually involving suspenders) and shout along with the on-screen dialogue.

The DVD has enough extra material to delight most fans. One of the audio tracks even simulates being at a *Rocky Horror* cinema showing, complete with a beered-up audience yelling all manner of things from the rear speakers. Don't miss it! ■



VERDICT

Classic, dumb-as-you-like musical with fantastic songs and an arthouse visual style that hasn't lost its charm despite being around for 25 years. Fans will need no persuading to invest in a copy, and even non-believers might find it strangely moving.

9

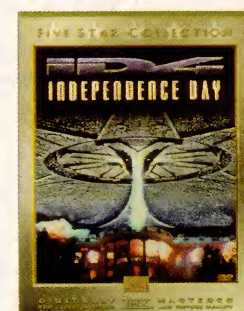
INDEPENDENCE DAY SPECIAL EDITION

■ From: Fox, £20 ■ Starring: Will Smith, Jeff Goldblum, Bill Pullman ■ Written, Produced and Directed by: Roland Emmerich and Dean Devlin ■ Certificate: 12 ■ Extras: 'Creating Reality' making of documentary, Commentary by Emmerich and Devlin, Special Effects commentary, Alternative ending, Deleted scenes, Production gallery, Trailers

■ It's got the world's most ludicrous script, Jeff Goldblum playing himself again, vicious aliens who can fend off nuclear power but not the 'power' of an Apple Mac laptop, and – perhaps most offensively of all – it has America leading a seemingly hapless world into battle.

Question is, then, why is *Independence Day: Special Edition* still worth investing in? Principally because, despite how obviously rubbish it is, it's *fun*. Fantastic special effects help plug the gaps (and there's plenty of them, thanks mainly to Emmerich and Devlin's inability to write a one piece

of good dialogue), while Smith and Pullman help steady the ship with sturdy performances. Robert Loggia does a good turn as a nutball army general, but what makes this really worth getting hold of is the second disc, which includes some nice commentaries, a brilliant documentary and an alternative ending – which if you can possibly believe it, is even worse than the real one. Deleted scenes shed a little extra light on the film, but it's the special effects team of Volker Engle and Doug Smith that really hold this whole thing together, with fantastic commentaries and an insight into the standout scenes. Average film, great DVD. ■



VERDICT

As a film, *Independence Day* is entertaining but irritating, weighed down by a script straight out of *Neighbours*. But, as a DVD, *Special Edition* is superb, with some eye-blistering extras – and a special effects insight never bettered in this format.

7

WIN!!!

All four DVDs up for grabs! Just answer the following question: Who played the US President in *Independence Day*? Was it: a) Bill Pullman; b) Will Smith; c) Robert De Niro? Stick your answer on a postcard and send it to: VideoGamer, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW. Closing date: March 5th 2001 (Sorry. To enter the compo, you have to be over 18.)



PSone Monitor

- PSone
- Wild Things 02920 775744
- £109

■ It's not cheap, but this works a treat – and fits snugly into your PSone. The screen is four inches in size, and while the picture doesn't quite match a TV's, the quality of the image is very good. The monitor also pumps out the game's audio and while it's passable, we'd recommend using headphones which provide perfect sound. In the bundle you also get a power pack for the monitor and the all important car-ciggy lighter connector which does the whole job of powering your PSone and the monitor. Wild Things told us they hope to make other extras in the near future – such as portable battery packs – but even as it is it's one really smart piece of kit.

verdict

We were impressed by the overall design but more importantly it provides quality portable gaming. A fair slice of wedge, but worth it.

8

Pumpaction Blaster

- Dreamcast
- Thrustmaster 020 8686 5600
- £25

■ The "Pumpaction" refers to a chunky piece of plastic under the barrel that you pull back to reload, to simulate physically reloading a gun, bringing greater realism to the carnage. And to a degree it does just that, but it does make shooting your way out of a tight squeeze more difficult, as you have to frantically pump the gun to reload. Set to auto-reload and auto-fire and you turn the hand-held into a sub-machine gun. Pull the trigger and bullets continue to fly like bats out of hell. Cheesy, but for once it adds to the gameplay, making short sessions a great laugh. And it's accurate!

verdict

The gun is realistic and makes games harder, but are there enough games out there to warrant the dosh? The choice, as they say, is yours.

7

PS2 Scart Cable

- PS2
- Spectra Video 0181 902 2211
- £6

■ As reported in last issue of **VideoGamer**, the PS2 has some problems with the quality of the DVD playback. The composite lead gives inferior picture quality to a SCART lead but SCART gives the DVD playback a green tint. Logic 3 has been quick to produce their own lead hoping to sort the problem. In short, it hasn't. It provides the same composite quality picture (game/DVD) as the one in the box. It does have a connector for linking up to a sound system but overall, it's disappointing. It's as good as the original but no better. The good news is that Logic 3 hope to sort some of PS2's playback probs in the near future.

verdict

As good as the official lead for six quid. Only problem is you don't need it. Of course, if for some reason your boxed one goes tits up, get this.

5

Racing Wheel

- Dreamcast
- Thrustmaster 020 8686 5600
- £40

■ This racing wheel has the Ferrari badge on the front but is it any good? Actually, it's the best – on any system. The wheel feels nice and weighty, and is easily the most lifelike construction we've experienced. The pedals are sturdy with a huge foot plate which means you have to rest your feet on it to reach the pedals, so your own weight keeps the pedals from slipping away – simple yet so effective. The true test of a wheel is when you lose it. Instead of the impossible swerving that usually ensues, this wheel enables skillful righting of the car. The feeling of handling a real steering wheel is second to none. We love it, so will you.

verdict

We were gobsmacked by just how good this wheel felt and performed. If you have a DC racer, get this, it really does add to the driving experience.

9

Win!

Everything you see on this page!

Every month we're going to give you the opportunity to walk away with everything we review in Top Gear. All you've got to do is write into the address below or e-mail us via the power of the Internet with the correct answer to the following teaser:

What is SCART?
a. A US food store
b. A form of herpes
c. A TV signal
d. A small Irish elf

Write to us at..

VideoGamer magazine
30 Monmouth Street
Bath BA1 2BW

Fax us on:
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E-mail us at:
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THE RULES

1. No purchase is necessary.
2. No Future Publishing employee or those companies whose products are featured here may enter this competition.
3. The closing date is Monday March 5th.
4. The editor's decision is final. A bit like death.
5. There is no cash alternative to the compo prizes. Because there ain't.
6. Absolutely no correspondence will be entered into regarding any aspect of this competition.
7. Individuals may only enter this competition once. And we will spot multiples.
8. "...and we sipped champers on the yacht too."

TOP GEAR



P1500 Rumble Pad

- PC
- Saitek 01454 855050
- £30

■ This is a PC pad modelled on Playstation controllers – i.e. double shoulder buttons, analogue stick and layout of the main buttons. It supports games that use rumble feedback and has a neat feature where you can lock the analogue stick on either the X or Y axis. Not every game would use this feature, but it's handy for driving games where all you want is the X axis (side to side movement) for steering. We found the analogue stick a bit over-sensitive, but as most games allow you to adjust sensitivity, this shouldn't be a problem. All in all, a pad that performs well.

verdict

Solid, reliable, with a couple of neat features to boot. Not a cheap option but you're unlikely to need another PC pad once you have this.

7

Compupack

- All CDs/DVDs
- Compupack 0800 0852693
- £18

■ If the office game room is anything to go by, being tidy isn't at the forefront of gamers' minds. Yet there's no denying that kit looked after well lasts longer and none more so than your CDs and DVDs. This boxset holds six discs in each of its six binders, adding up to a respectable 36 slots for your games or films. Not only are discs individually protected by their durable plastic sleeves, but inside is a piece of material that stops any potential scratching of the important side of the disc. Sounds anal, but it works. This doesn't seem like a cheap option, but if it saves one game or DVD film from an early demise then it's paid for itself. A wise purchase.

verdict

Not essential, but a good idea. And if it keeps your favourite games and films scratch-free, then it's well worth shelling out 18 quid for.

5

8MB Memory Card

- PS2
- MadCatz 01992 707400
- £25

■ Third-party memory cards, eh? The gamer's blight if ever there was one. So it's not without good reason that we approach these potential game killers with caution. However, this card is a licensed third-party product, meaning Sony have given the necessary technology to MadCatz to build a reliable card. We've had the card for a while, bombarding it with saves and loading it to the hilt. But we've had no problems at all – every save we made loaded up without a hitch. What more can we say? We entrusted our most precious saves to the card and it hasn't let us down.

verdict

Memory cards are vital and seeing as this is a few squid less than the official product despite using the same components. A definite result.

8

DVD Remote Control

- PS2
- Spectra Video 0181 902 2211
- £15

■ Sleek, black and begging to be lost in the dark recesses of your sofa, this PS2 remote does all the DVD twiddling you need and is much more user-friendly than the joypad. The remote's receiver has a pass-through port for your joypad, and does feel a tad unstable in the console port with a pad plugged in – so we wouldn't recommend thrashing about with your pad. But our major niggle is that to change from DVD watching to game playing, you have to get up to flick a mode switch on the receiver. You'd think the point of a pass-through port was that you *didn't* have to get off the sofa.

verdict

Besides the mode switch niggle, this remote works fine and it's only fifteen notes, which seems a fair price to us. Oh, and you get batteries too.

6

COMPETITION

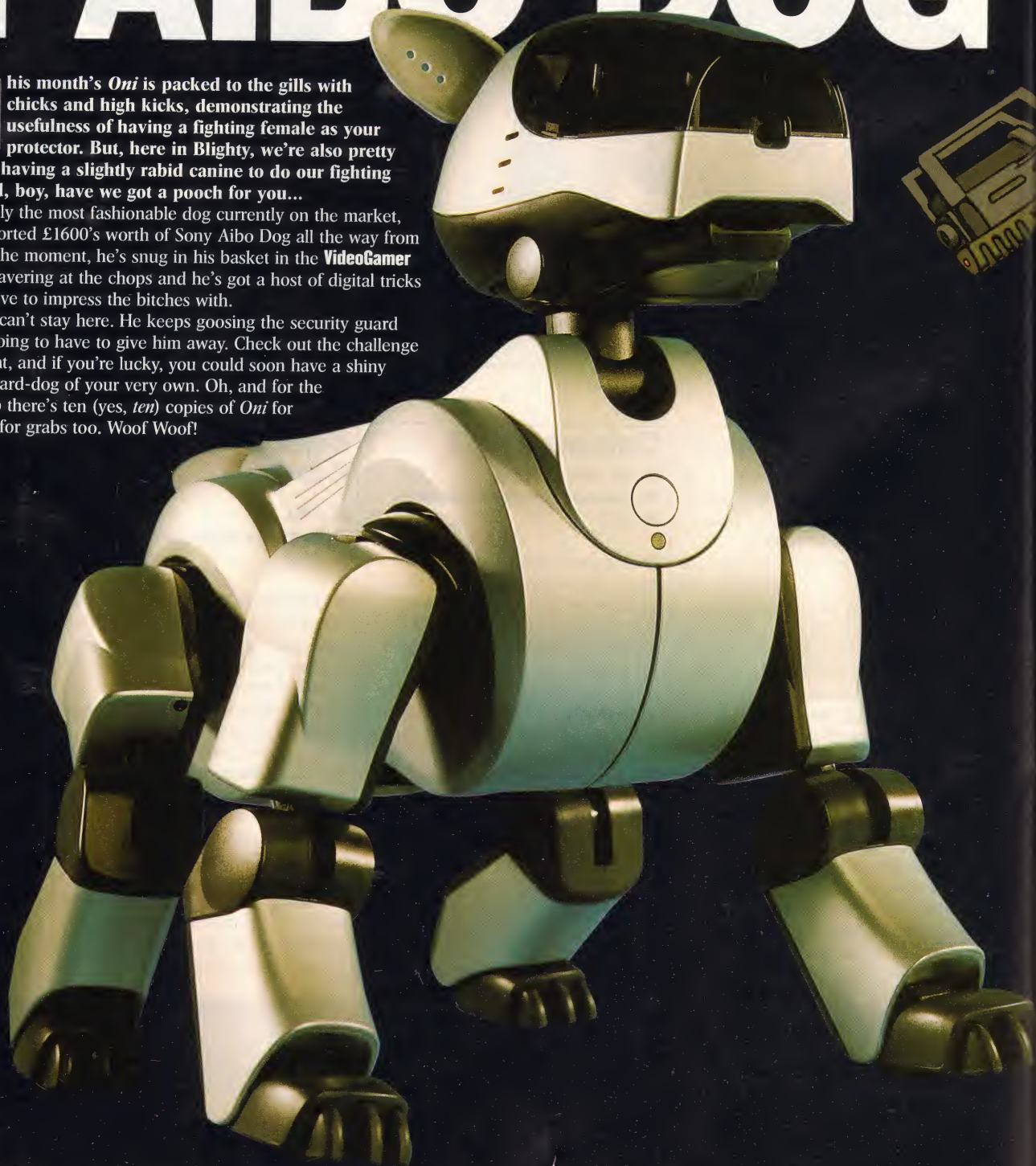
WIN! AN AIBO DOG



This month's *Oni* is packed to the gills with chicks and high kicks, demonstrating the usefulness of having a fighting female as your protector. But, here in Blighty, we're also pretty partial to having a slightly rabid canine to do our fighting for us and, boy, have we got a pooch for you...

Arguably the most fashionable dog currently on the market, we've imported £1600's worth of Sony Aibo Dog all the way from Japan. At the moment, he's snug in his basket in the **VideoGamer** office, a-slaving at the chops and he's got a host of digital tricks up his sleeve to impress the bitches with.

But he can't stay here. He keeps goosing the security guard so we're going to have to give him away. Check out the challenge on the right, and if you're lucky, you could soon have a shiny chrome guard-dog of your very own. Oh, and for the runners up there's ten (yes, *ten*) copies of *Oni* for the PC up for grabs too. Woof Woof!



Win an Aibo dog worth over £1600



PLUS!
10 COPIES OF ONI
FOR THE PC

The Challenge

THE RULES

1. Employees of Take 2 Interactive and Future Publishing are quite simply not allowed to enter.
2. Any entries arriving after March 5th 2001 will be made into paper aeroplanes and given to small children in the street to show Mummy.
3. Multiple entries are deeply tedious and just clog up the entry box. So don't bother.
4. The Editor is happy to chat about the weather, and P45's, but as regards this competition his decision is final, and no chit-chat of any sort will be entered into.
5. The appearance of the prize might differ slightly from that pictured here. Don't worry - it's nothing serious, it's just that the dog might be a different colour.
6. Question!

1. A dog is for life, not just for Christmas. And so to get your mitts on our mutt we want you to **convince us that you can give it a more loving home than we can.** We really don't want to give him away, but if you can persuade us that you'll keep him warmer and better fed (and house-train him better than we can), he's all yours.

2. The method you choose to use to convince us is entirely up to you: you could **construct the ultimate doggie accessory kit from cardboard and sellotape**, or knit a handy jumper for Aibo, or maybe sketch out a design for a female version (wink, wink) of our mechanical canine. Whatever you do, you'd better do it well, and do it fast.

3. Send your innovative creations or scraps of paper to the: "Not A Pile Of Doo-Doo" Compo, **VideoGamer**, 30, Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW



Can't wait?



Computer and video games, DVD and movie news, as it happens.

FEBRUARY 2001

CRACKED!

BUSTED!

DEAD OR ALIVE 2

Play to win with our invaluable guide to this no-holds-barred PlayStation2 beat-'em-up.



RUMBLED!

WWF SMACKDOWN! 2

Muscle in on all the grappling action with our guide to PlayStation's top wrestle-'em-up.

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PlayStation

Looney Tunes: Space Race
Star Wars: Episode One
Moto Racer
Star Wars: Demolition
Driver

PlayStation2

NFL 2001
X-Squad

Dreamcast

Looney Tunes: Space Race
Star Wars: Demolition

Nintendo 64

Army Men: Sarge's Heroes 2
Stunt Racer 64
San Francisco Rush 2049

Twisted Edge
World Driver Championship

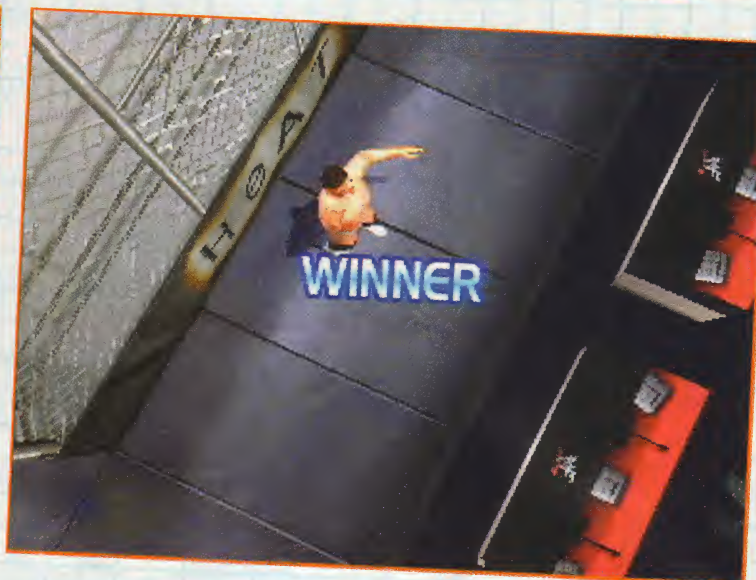
PC

Half-Life
No One Lives Forever
Alice
Gunman Chronicles

Game Boy

Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX
Harvest Moon 2
Super Mario Bros DX
Pokémon Puzzle Game
San Francisco Rush 2049
Turok 3: Shadow Of Oblivion
Spider-Man
Disney's The Jungle Book

SPECIAL



HOW TO...

layeth the smacketh downeth in...



WWF SMACKDOWN! 2

Smackdown! 2 is a simple beast at heart. None of your Tekken-style 10-hit combos here, but there is a bleeding, pulsating bag of muscly good bits underneath its skin. Have a poke around, won't you?

Make the most of the game with these top tips...

■ **How to get on top of the cell in Hell in a Cell**
Simple, this. You can approach in two ways. See the lighter-coloured parts of the cell? These are weaker than the other bits. Run into one of the weaker parts and press **Ⓢ** just before you hit the ropes. Alternatively, throw your opponent into one of the lighter parts. Then leave the ring and go to the side of the cell. Walk up to the edge of it and press **Ⓢ**. You'll climb it, so get ready to smash your foe through the cage or chuck him onto a table far below.

■ **How to throw someone through the cell in Hell in a Cell**

Probably your best bet here would be to create a wrestler with any of the moves where this is possible. Surprisingly, the Undertaker and co are not necessarily able to do it. The moves that work include the Samurai Driver, the Super Powerbomb and the Tombstone.

■ **How the Double Team moves work**
In a straightforward tag team match, throw your opponent into your partner's corner with **Ⓢ** then either Up-Left or Down-Right as appropriate. Once they're there, you can select from any of your character's four Double Team moves with **Ⓢ** and any direction. **Ⓢ** plus Left or Right are the default moves which every wrestler can do, whereas **Ⓢ** plus Up or Down executes a Trademark move like the 3D or Poetry in Motion. Oh, and remember – you can't do

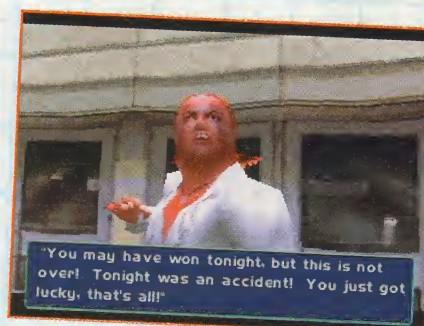
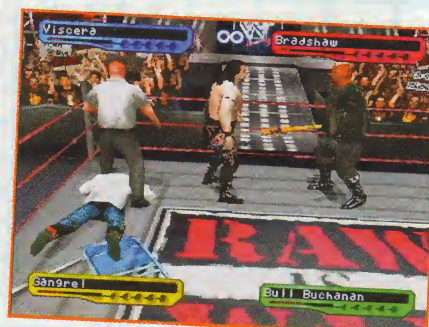
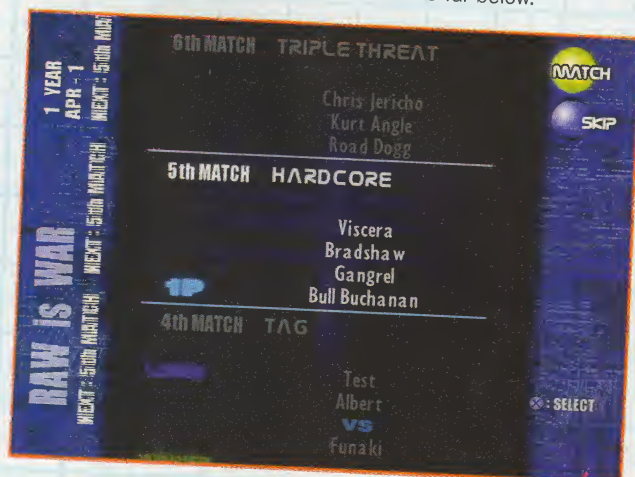
Double Team moves in a Tornado match.

■ **How to access all the moves in Create-a-Superstar**

First unlock them in the Season Mode by facing off against a series of 'Unknown' characters. If you fancy that wrestler's set of moves, you just have to beat them to be able to use their best grapples and the like. Simple. They're all real wrestlers, some Japanese, some WCW, ECW and so on.

■ **Why some wrestlers have more points to play with in Create-a-Wrestler.**

Through careful experimentation, we've found that the only thing that makes a difference to the amount of points you start off with is whether you're a Lightweight or a Heavyweight. Lightweights get 140 points, whereas Heavyweights get a beefy 150. For extra points, choose things like Weak Neck, Weak Waist and ex-Soldier. It's even





possible to get up to 225 with the Knight, the Beauty Prince, the Iron King, Weak Waist, and Weak Elbow.

■ **Smashing opponents through the table**
Here are a few ways. Do a Piledriver when you're beside the table and your opponent is on it. Watch out, though, as it can be reversed. Alternatively, a Powerbomb or the Rock Bottom will work. For something a bit more flash, do an aerial manoeuvre from another table, the ladder, a corner post or even the cell. This last one is very difficult to pull off, as your downed foe can easily get out of the way.

■ **Moves to throw people off the cell, through the table, into the ring and out of the ring**

These should help you out...

- Super Power Bomb
- Karate Punch

- Back Body Drop
- Release German Suplex
- Tori Suplex
- Climbing the cage and doing a 450 on someone on the announcer's table.
- Shooting Star Press
- Body Press FW
- Tazz Belly To Belly

■ How to unlock the best match

To get to grips with the most hardcore match the game has to offer, you have to first unlock T Magnum, which is no mean feat in itself. You have to beat him in an all-out TLC match. Your most successful tactic here will be to tie the flaming barbed wire bulldog around his neck and throw him off the scaffold through the flaming, thumbtack barbed wire table. Hold onto the rope, though, for maximum agony. Then simply throw him off the tenth floor balcony and he'll disintegrate into a bloody pulp. Then settle down for a nice cuppa.

■ The best move

Current favourite is the Super Buh Buh Bomb. He runs to the outside of the arena and boards a nuclear bomber, which then drops the bomb in the arena. Which unsurprisingly results in instant death all round, but is really quite entertaining.

■ Finding the secret backstage areas

There's a secret area to the right of the boarded-up door. Get in there, and then Irish Whip your opponent into a patch at

about the middle of the right-hand wall. If the wall crumbles, head inside there to access the showers. There's another in the area with the 'Open' sign. There's a boarded-up area there. Whip your foe into that, and you'll unlock the Steam Room.

■ How to avoid fighting the same extra characters over and over again

Firstly, save at each opportunity. Then if it looks like you're faced with someone you've already beaten, reset the console. When you try it again you'll fight someone else, as it's all determined randomly. You'll also be able to unlock different stuff. >>





■ Pulling off reversals

Getting these to work is mostly a matter of timing. Randomly pumping **Ⓐ** is unlikely to produce results, so wait until the move is about to connect, then hit **Ⓐ** and the control pad in the direction of your opponent. If you hit **Ⓐ** and sideways you'll whip round behind him, which is useful if you've got a good move from behind.

■ Finding a safe haven

Strangely enough, no one can get at you when you're positioned on top of the drinks machine, in the corridor that's got four doors leading off it.



■ Making the most of the forklift

Press **Ⓐ** to go quickly with it, or press **ⓧ** to execute an attack.

■ How to elbow someone who's reeling from one of your throws, and then spin round to his front

This one can cause a fair bit of damage. Simply press **Ⓐ** once, the way you would to perform a standard Irish Whip. However, you must *immediately* press **ⓧ** and your opponent will come back towards you. You then will perform the elbow-spin manoeuvre and perform your Finisher on him. But bear in mind that this only works if you have a Front Finisher assigned to your wrestler. Despite being quite impressive, this move is reversible, which can leave you dazed and witless for a few moments.

■ Glitches

We've found one glitch, and although it will help, it isn't particularly advantageous. In any arena, go into the stage area. Stay right in the middle, near to where you go down to the lower area. Now press **Ⓐ** and before you get to the lower area press **Ⓐ** to fall to the ground. Then press **ⓧ** and **Ⓐ** to roll in a particular direction. You should be floating around on thin air. Run towards the stage and you'll be floating on an invisible stage. Stand in the middle again and press run. You'll be floating even higher this time. From there, do another roll and you'll gain more height. You can repeat this procedure to gain as much height as you want!

■ The best wrestlers

Supposedly, *WWF Smackdown! 2*'s wrestlers are all equally balanced, but after spending far too long playing the game we've had a series of good results with the following ten...

- Steve Blackman
- Al Snow
- Crash
- Hardcore Holly
- Essa Rios
- Road Dogg
- Chris Benoit
- Chris Jericho
- Dean Malenko
- Perry Saturn

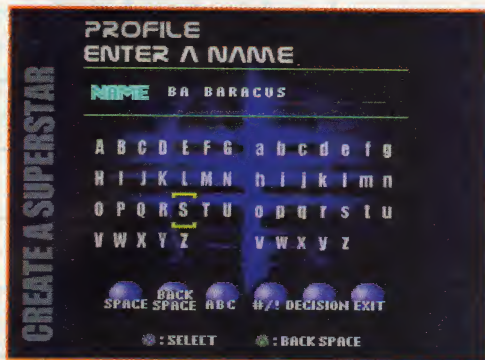
Try them out and see if you agree.

TOP TIP

The BIG Secret

Unlocking all the fun-packed craziness of *Smackdown! 2* seems like a lot of work, right? Don't sweat it, Jabroni. In Season Mode, play all the way through to the Wrestlemania for year five. Make damn sure you win here, because then all of those mysterious 'Unknowns' will become everything you've been striving to unlock. All at once. And it's *well* worth have a go at.





"HE'S ALMOST HUMAN..."

Re-create famous characters with these Create-a-Wrestler specs. Hours of fun guaranteed...

MISTER T

Male

Body type: Normal

Head: Advanced

Face: Nose 95 (figure type 4)

Eyes: 114 Variation 128, Shade 130, Brightness 108

Mouth: 5

Hair: Base 27 Variation 128, Shade 130, Brightness 68 (figure type 14)

Forehead and Back: Nothing

Facial hair: 004 (type 4) Variation 128, Shade 128, Brightness 40

Accessories: 004

Upper Body: Advanced

Base-m-type: 001, (figure type 2)

Wrist bands: L,R 005 length 48, Variation 128, Shade 128, Brightness 100

Vest: 015

Accessories: 15

Lower Body: Advanced

Shoes: 005 length 36 (figure pants)

Pants: 027

Skin Colour: 4

Arms: 132 for all

Forearms: 135 for all

Wrists: 132 for all

Thighs: 132 for all

Legs: 132 for all

Ankles: 135 for all

Feet: 135 for all

Height: 612

■ To create versions of some *Mortal Kombat* stalwarts – Subzero, Reptile, Smoke, and Rain – simply vary the colour schemes on the

following Create-a-Wrestler specs.

Head

Paint: 35 Variation 116 Shade 0 Brightness 60

Accessories: 44 Variation 128 Shade 128 Brightness 68

Accessories (Mask): 25 Variation 128 Shade 128 Brightness 68

Upper Body

Base: 1

T-Shirt: 1 Length 99 Brightness 0

Wrist Pads: 1 Length 67 Variation 67 Shade 131 Brightness 68

Elbow Pads: 15 Variation 140 Shade 169 Brightness 80

Hands: 7 Variation 170 Shade 193 Brightness 152

Vest: 10 Variation 45 Shade 195 Brightness 152

Lower Body

Short Pants: 6

Variation 238

Shade 114

Brightness 108

Accessories:

1 Variation

255 Shade

148

Brightness 108

Belt: 19 Variation 255 Shade 148

Brightness 108

Skin Colour: Brightness 0

Music: Kane

Signs: Any three Japanese

■ That Jill Valentine from *Resi 3* isn't bad. Recreate her zombie-trashing antics...

Base Model: B-1

Nose: 75 Type 1

Eyes: 73 Type 1

Mouth: 78 Type 1

Hair

Base: 66 Type 1 120 Shade 128 Brightness 108

Upper Body

Base: Type 5

Chest: 4

T-Shirt: 47 Variation 0 Shade 180

Brightness 80 Lower Body

Short Pants: 10 Brightness 100

Feet: shoes 32 Length 64

Figure

Height: 568

Head: Mass 120

Upper Body: All to mass 100 except chest 110

Lower Body: Mass 100 except waist 110

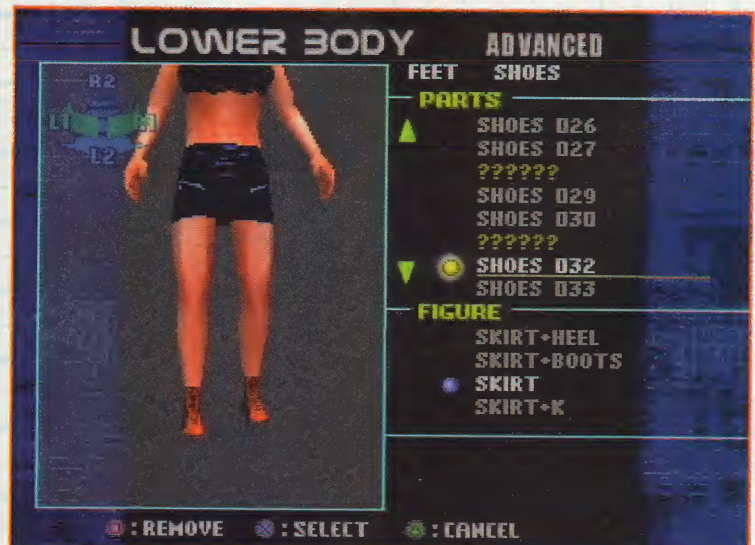
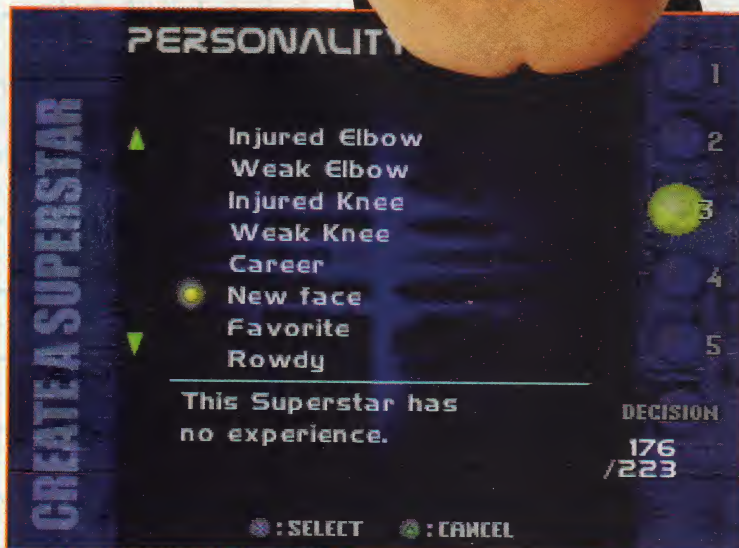
Characters

New Face

Lady

Ex-Police Officer

Weapon: Rocket Launcher



HOW TO... guarantee a full trophy cabinet in...



FIFA 2001

Disengage your football brain and get yourself into *FIFA* mode. It might not be pretty, but here's how to destroy the opposition with one beady eye on Kevin Keegan's play book...



VIVA LA DIFFERENCE

■ The PS2 version of the latest blockbuster from developers EA may look worlds apart from the PlayStation incarnation, but in terms of gameplay, they are almost exactly the same. One crucial difference, however, is the passing – in the PlayStation game the ball pings easily to your team-mates' feet, so it's worth knocking it about a bit. In the PS2 version you will need to place greater emphasis on driving through the middle, such is the *FIFA* way.

GOING FORWARD

■ The game is all about pace and attacking, with forward players afforded great advantages over the defenders. *FIFA* is designed to produce goals, so you'd better capitalise on your attacking chances.

Attacking

■ Always play a predominantly dribbling game and use square through balls across the park to bring in wide players as you spot a run, or to capitalise on central bursts. Play such in-field balls in tight spaces and latch onto them with a simple skill move, such as a 360° spin (R2) to break any challenges. This defence-shattering technique should put you clean through on goal. Don't forget to take the ball slightly wide – if you approach the goalkeeper head on you are unlikely to score.

In the PlayStation version it is essential to hit the channels with through balls. This not only provides a defensive outlet, but it will help you mount a variant on your usual attack by getting a cross in.

Whip the ball into the near post area and look for headers and bundled volleys. It's a glitch that is easy to exploit, mainly because the absence of a power bar means you can hit the ball at full pelt.

Striking

■ The principal way of scoring is to always aim for the near post, pushing as hard away from the goalkeeper (on the D-pad/analogue stick) as you can. This defies conventional footballing logic, and admittedly the goalkeeper will often parry the ball if you shoot across him. However, in the PS2 version especially, your on-rushing strikers are unlikely to have the time or space to finish. On the next gen console you should also 'over' power any digs within 12 yards of the goal to get the maximum force behind the ball. From this range the ball won't sail over the bar.

Using skills

■ It seems all too easy at times to progress with impunity as you set off on a run. To ease your passage further, use skill moves liberally. The sidesteps and spins are most effective, and even the Ronaldo flick will prove occasionally useful. Only use the Jump move (L2) when you're in a real jam as it will break tackles, but tends to slow you down considerably.

Of course, you don't need to use set manoeuvres to play skillfully in *FIFA* – one of the most effective ways of shaking a man is by jinking momentarily towards him and committing him to a tackle, before turning away and heading off a free man.





PlayStation2

DEFENDING

Grafting

■ A strong work ethic has always been crucial in *FIFA*, so don't expect to relax and allow your men to stroke the ball about. To be successful you'll need to use Sprint and attempt to harass your opponent at every opportunity. It's important to close the ball down to prevent mazy runs. As your players tire, make substitutions. If you pursue this tactic, it's always worth reverting to a policy of containment for the last ten minutes of each half as weary legs will often result in a goal against. The easiest way to do this is by modifying your formation. More of that later.

Tackling

■ When the ball's loose, slide in, particularly in the PS2 version where challenges result less frequently in disciplinary action, use the foot-in, or 'conservative' challenge when you are closing opponents down and when you approach a player from anywhere behind him. If you fail to get the ball, it won't commit your man and it should save you from the game's card-happy refs. One old trick is to play a through ball into space and aim to make a foot-in challenge as your opponent attempts to control the ball. This is an aggressive and ugly approach, but can prove fruitful.

Defending set pieces

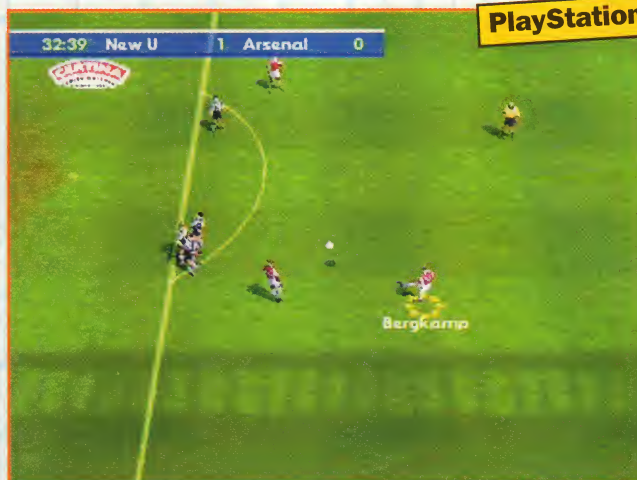
■ Your men automatically assume a defensive shape to cover each of the attackers' options, but you should assess the greatest threat and press the corresponding button to double up on the man you think is most likely to shoot first time without passing to a team-mate. On corners, your opponents will attempt to capitalise on the crowded state of the penalty area by making late runs, altering the set-piece they are attempting. Don't move at all at first and as soon as they start to jostle, pick up anyone moving from a position where there's a high concentration of defenders.

SET-PIECE MASTER CLASS

■ Here's a guaranteed scoring method for the PlayStation game. When you get a set-piece anything up to 25 yards out, point the arrow just to the side of the goalkeeper (the one that's nearest the wall) and apply full curl to go around the side of the wall furthest from the goalie. Now hold \otimes and allow the arrow to grow to its maximum size before releasing it. Because there is no auto-shoot, you can afford to watch the arrow grow and shrink to judge the maximum size before taking the plunge.



PlayStation



PlayStation

In the PS2 game, as a rule of thumb you shouldn't bother shooting unless you are close enough for the opposition to set up a four-man wall. Place the direction bar between the third and final man (the furthest two away from the goalkeeper) and push it as high as it can go. Give the ball full bend so the ball arcs away from the goalie and select power between 50% and 60%. This power bar is the key factor in your attempt, as the goalkeepers move rapidly and rarely let go of the ball.

On both games, for free-kicks outside your range toggle between set-pieces to get your players moving and creating space before pressing an action button corresponding to one of your attackers who has found space.

TACTICS

Standard

■ Play with the modified 4-4-2 that Arsenal use as a default, with one attacker playing off the other. That way the wide players provide a great outlet and source of attacks, while the two strikers will separate if you bomb down the line to give touchline and six-yard box options. When you attack through the middle they will create space for one another too.

Defensive

■ Select a 4-5-1 formation with a flat back four and three deep midfielders. Set Defence to full and to 'contain' and choose a counter-attacking style. The bodies in midfield will help stop incisive runs and you should have enough width to cut off crosses before your opponent reaches the byline and enough men in the middle third to play 'keep ball'.

Attacking

■ Go for a 4-3-3 with two players off a front man and two advanced midfielders as well as flat back four with the full backs pushing on. With a full attacking approach this won't give you much width, but it will certainly provide you with those all-important runners from midfield. You should have time to work the ball wide as your withdrawn front men play as forwards.



HOW TO... be master of the killing fields in...



QUAKE III ARENA

There's a definite art to killing – or, in *QIII* speak, 'fragging'. Casual observers might think it's just 'run and shoot', but that couldn't be further from the truth. Ask any PC gamer and you'll probably receive a prolonged lecture on the virtues of 'strafing', 'rocket jumps' and 'camping'. You no get? Worry not, gentle Dreamcast owner, VideoGamer is at hand with all the essential tips you'll need for victory...



Weapons

■ There's no two ways about it – weapons are the main reason you're here. Ultimately, firepower rules the arena and those with it generally live longer. Learning your arsenal is absolutely imperative, as there are some real duds in there, as well as a couple of hard-to-use numbers:

Gauntlet

■ Your default weapon is the Gauntlet, a glove that incorporates a whirling, serrated blade that's electrically charged. It'll kill an enemy with two hits, but requires point blank range to do so. Only for the very brave, or very foolish.

Machine Gun

■ The Machine Gun, although able to fire rapidly, is virtually useless as it does so little damage. You'd be wise to ditch it as soon as you possibly can.

Shotgun

■ The Shotgun is pretty powerful up close and personal, but loses its pep with

extended proximity. Be careful, though, as it's slow to reload.

Plasma Gun

■ The Plasma Gun ups the ante somewhat, with fast fire and a lot of power, but consumes ammo at the rate of knots. Keep your eye on the charge level.

Grenade Launcher

■ Next up is the Grenade Launcher. This one demands a bit of forward planning when used, given that the grenades take time to detonate. The best course of action is to stand on a ledge and drop them into an enclosed space, where they'll bounce around setting off a chain reaction of explosions. It's also possible to get them to detonate on impact, but it requires a direct hit, which can be hard to gauge. Not a weapon you want in a firefight, then.

Rocket Launcher

■ Collect the Rocket Launcher for some real messy action. You'll find it's slow beyond belief, but able to destroy an enemy

with splash alone – a rocket up the jacksie is instant death. Keep your distance and watch the giblets fly.

Rail Gun

■ The Rail Gun is a deadly tool that fires used uranium slugs at near-light speeds. It takes a few seconds to charge and will only be effective if you get a direct hit – but it's Game Over for anyone on the receiving end. Use the Zoom function to feel like a sniper.

Lightning Gun

■ If it's electric death you hanker after, then pick up the Lightning Gun at your earliest convenience. This baby creates a stream of electricity that roasts anything it comes into contact with. Listen out for the ominous hum when it's equipped.

BFG-10K

■ The BFG stands for Big Effing Gun and rightly so. This is total destruction in a can. Stock it up to 200 with ammo and squeeze the trigger to clear a path. One shot equals one enemy death. You're in charge now.





Strafing and cornering

■ Movement is important in *Quake III Arena*. Running around like a crazy fool will soon see you on the slab. Strafing will help you survive, so learn to do this as quickly as you can. Sometimes known as 'side-stepping', it simply means moving left and right, as well as forward and back. Cornering just using the analogue stick will mean you emerge as an easy target, whereas turning into the corner to face in the new direction, (typically 90 degrees), will ensure that you'll be aiming at a potential enemy. You know it makes sense.

Jinking

■ Weapons are of little use if you can't command them properly. Encountering an enemy usually means panic that leads to blind firing until one of you drops down dead. For starters, try not to remain on the spot – a moving target is a lot harder to hit than a stationary one. Incorporate this into your firing, by strafing back and forth as you aim at your opponent. This is known as 'jinking'. It's also possible to circle them while keeping your guns trained for maximum damage.

Gibbing

■ This is a contraction of the word 'giblets'. In its verb form, it simply means to kill with such ferocity that the enemy is reduced to giblets. Look out for the huge explosion of flesh and blood. Those delightful chunks left lying around are known as 'kibbles'. Weapon of choice is the Rocket Launcher, or if you can find it, the BFG-10K.

Backflips

■ To do a backflip, you have to pull back on the analogue stick whilst you are jumping backwards off a wall or a ledge. The result is a 360-degree jump that puts your character through a hard-to-hit, but beautiful arc. You can only actually see it happen when you're playing in third-person perspective, though.

Jump pads

■ These glowing circles are a source of quick escape when under the threat of being gibbed, so learn each one on a level, its power and where it lands you. A good example is the one on the 'Hidden Keep' arena. This sits in the middle of the courtyard, but once you touch it, you can fly vertically whilst you're aiming at ground targets. Again, a moving target is much harder to hit.

Rocket jumps

■ A rather dangerous measure that can award you with a sharp evasive manoeuvre in an emergency. Fire the Rocket Launcher at your feet to experience recoil that'll drive you skywards. In the absence of a Jump Pad, you'll be out of there in a flash. For obvious reasons, you don't want to execute this move when you're low on energy.

Armour and Pick-Ups

■ There is a good variety of pick-ups strewn about the arenas and many of them are mundane, obligatory inclusions, such as health and armour. Little needs to be said about these, other than you'll live longer if you collect armour and stock up on health when you're low.

However, there are also some rather interesting power-ups that can alter the course of battle quite drastically:

Haste

■ A basic power-up, but a useful one, this speeds the player up considerably, allowing for long jumps and increased manoeuvrability. Keep moving to create confusion amongst enemies.

Regeneration

■ This pick-up increases your health to a maximum of 200 points. Unfortunately, due to its slow nature, it will not protect you against successive hits from enemies, but is excellent when you're in retreat. Keep hidden to regain full health.

Flight

■ Only available in multiplayer games, this pack neutralises the effects of gravity during jumps, allowing you to levitate above your enemies. This is particularly effective when they are unaware of your presence, giving you the chance to rain death down from above.

Invisibility

■ Does exactly what it says on the packet. You become 95 per cent undetectable, but muzzle flare will still give you away. Once again, keep moving so that your opponents can't pinpoint your position. Alternatively, another good trick is to creep up behind a camper and blast them into oblivion. Poetic justice incarnate.

Quad damage

■ The most sought-after icon of the lot. This little doozy multiplies the power of your chosen weapon by a factor of four. Apply this formula to the BFG 10K and you've got the most elevated status you can hold in *Quake III Arena*. The great thing is you can still frag someone who's collected it, then prise it from their lifeless body. Just make sure your health is cranked up to the max for an uninterrupted run of chaos.

Respawn frags

■ More luck than judgement, this is merely a frag that results when an enemy respawns (restarts after getting fragged) right in front of you. Unluckily for the recipient, all you need do is squeeze the trigger and listen for the obscenities. Fun when you pull it off.

Camping

■ The most hated of all the tricks in *Quake III Arena*, 'campers' are those that stand, or 'camp' next to weapons or armour, thus virtually guaranteeing invulnerability, or infinite ammo. Rest assured, it's regarded as unsporting and once they've cottoned on, the other players will hunt you down and shoot you like the dog you are.



HOW TO... make 'em eat bricks in...



DEAD OR ALIVE 2

Using the scenery, special tags and a little secret weapon known as analogue fighting, we show you how to crank up the pain factor to the maximum...

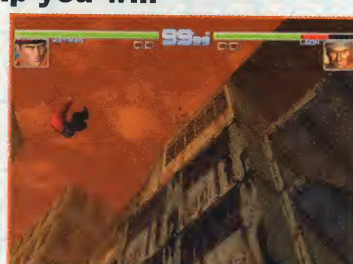
ON THE LEVEL How the scenery can help you win



■ As ace as smashing someone's bonce into a wall or kicking them off a ledge may be, there's actually a tactical advantage to it – scenery hits always add extra damage on top



of the damage incurred by the initial combo/hit that sent them sprawling. Typically, hitting someone against or through a piece of scenery adds 10 units of damage. A fall from a ledge

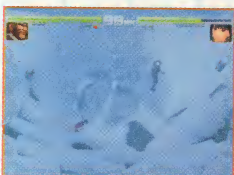


will add from 10 to up to 60 units, depending on how far they fall. If you hit someone through a piece of scenery so they then fall, you can add up to 70 units of damage.



Finally, there's the Danger Zones – explosive parts of scenery – that add 20 units of damage to your move. Now all you need to know is where you can strut your stuff...

THE WHITE STORM



■ At the 'open' end there's a cliff where you can knock the opponent down into an ice cave. Hit foes to the floor just before the small ridge near the cliff edge to break through the snow crust.



THE DEATH VALLEY



■ Here, you can kick people off a simple circular arena that has a raised stage in the centre, plus both the inner and outer walls of the bottom stage are danger zones.



THE DANGER ZONE



■ This is a very simple stage with walls that are jam-packed full of danger zones (as its name suggests) – the same thing goes for Danger Zone 2 and The Pancratium.



THE GREAT OPERA



■ Break through the balcony on this impressive stage and you'll send the enemy down to the next level... which never ends. Keep kicking them through the balcony for as long as they can take it.



THE DEMON'S CHURCH



■ Spectacular's the word for the Church. Smash your opponents through the stained glass window and then use the danger zone pillars at the bottom to finish the job in style. Excellent.



THE AERIAL GARDEN



■ Beautiful as it is, don't ogle. Instead, manoeuvre enemies to the waterfall and send them over the edge via the water or the fence. Like The Great Opera, the stage below endlessly repeats.



THE SPIRAL



■ All the walls here are danger zones, plus there's a ledge that'll take them to the lower stage... which, again, repeats endlessly.



THE BIO LAB



■ Not that inspiring but has one danger zone – the generator. However, it's good for a tight fight as the pillars keep the action up close and personal.



THE CRIMSON



■ No danger zones and only one fence and ledge to kick the opponent through and down to what looks like China Town... still, looks gorgeous.



THE KOKU AN



■ With one small ledge that leads to a lower level, it's not up there with the best levels but punching people through paper thin walls is neat.



THE BURAI ZENIN



■ Looking like something out of *Enter The Dragon*, you can smash through the main gate and the breaks in the wall either side of the gate.



THE L'S CASTLE



■ Disappointing, despite looking like a kung fu master's hang out. Just one small drop down for this level, we're afraid.



THE DRAGON HILLS

■ This is *DOA2*'s showpiece and not without good reason. In fact, there's so much going on we had to draw a map. Every fall and break-through is depicted and the extra damage – on top of the initial hit's damage – that results should give you a hint of where you should be setting up the mug that's holding the other joystick.



■ Window plus fall is +70 pain.



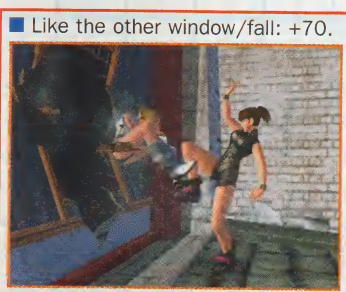
■ Being a modest drop, +20 hurt.



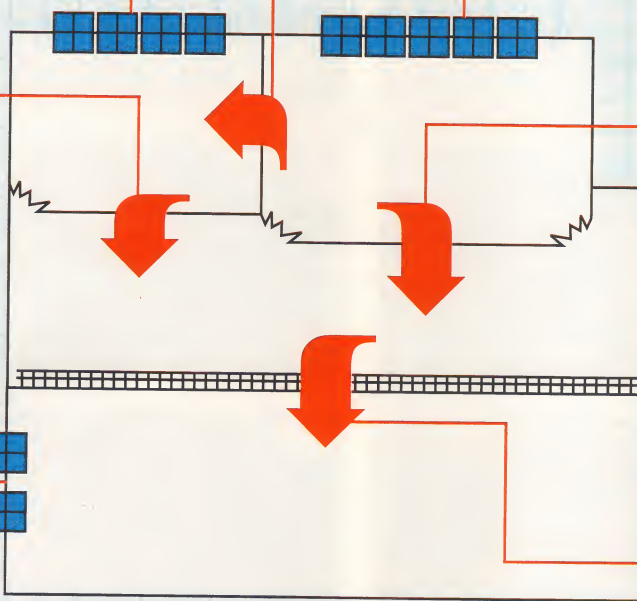
■ Spectacular – and a painful +70.



■ A nice +40 damage for this fall.



■ Like the other window/fall: +70.



■ Best looking drop and +40 splat.



■ A tight corner but +70's on offer.



■ Fence/fall means +50 of pain.

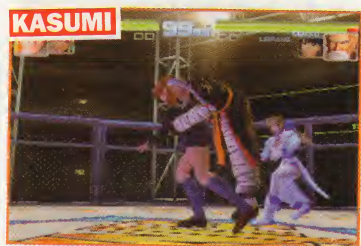
DRAGON'S LAIR

■ Get kicked through a window and you'll end up here to finish the fight off. The character who took the nose dive into the dragon's lair shouldn't have a chance considering the amount of damage they've suffered. If you get out of this one, pat yourself on the back.

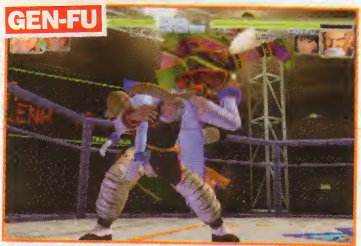
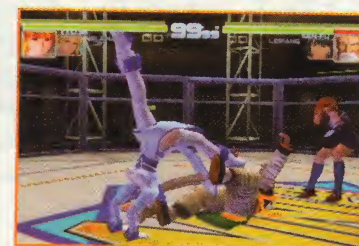
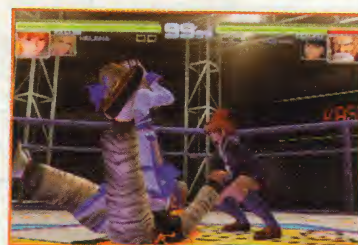
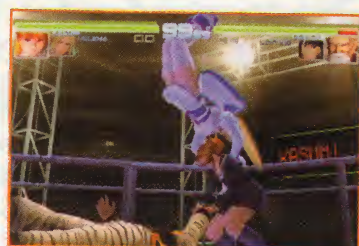


SPECIAL TAGS

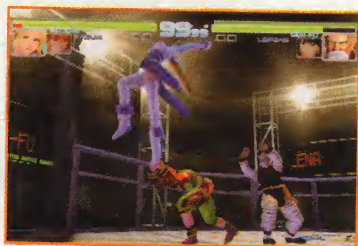
■ There are tons of killer tags the in-game moves list fails to mention, so below is a list of every special tag for each character that's been left out. The character under consideration has to initiate the tag with the usual forward, forward+tag – and these specials do +12 damage.



KASUMI
Secret Special Tag Partners ■ Ayane ■ Helena ■ Bass ■ Ein



GEN-FU
Secret Special Tag Partners ■ Zack ■ Bayman ■ Tina ■ Hayabusa ■ Leon ■ Leifang



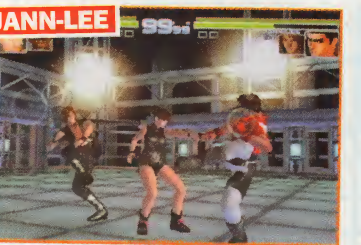
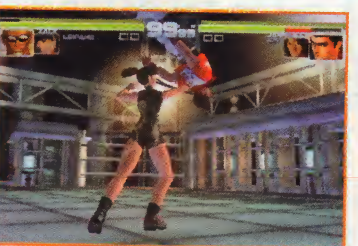
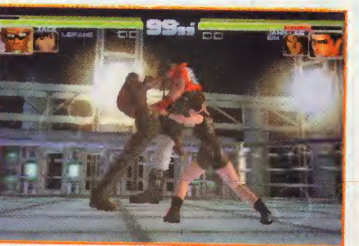
TINA
Secret Special Tag Partners ■ Bayman ■ Kasumi ■ Hayabusa ■ Leon ■ Leifang



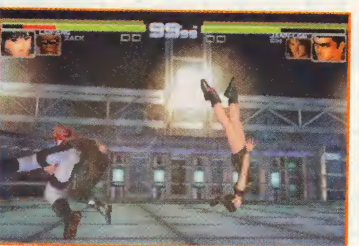
BAYMAN
Secret Special Tag Partners ■ Tina ■ Gen-Fu ■ Leon



ZACK
Secret Special Tag Partners ■ Bayman ■ Tina ■ Bass ■ Leifang



JANN-LEE
Secret Special Tag Partners ■ Bayman ■ Gen-Fu ■ Hayabusa ■ Leon ■ Ein

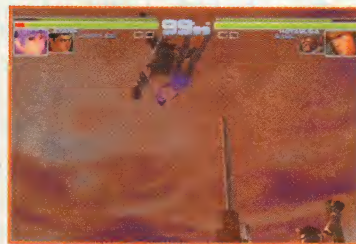


AYANE
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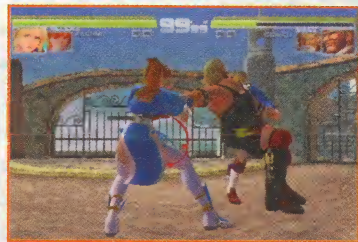




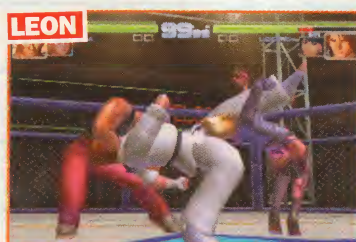
HAYABUSA
Secret Special Tag Partners ■ Ayane ■ Jann-Lee ■ Bayman ■ Tina ■ Gen-Fu ■ Bass ■ Leon ■ Ein



HELENA
Secret Special Tag Partners ■ Kasumi ■ Hayabusa ■ Leifang



BASS
Secret Special Tag Partners ■ Jann-Lee ■ Bayman ■ Gen-Fu ■ Leon



LEON
Secret Special Tag Partners ■ Bayman ■ Tina ■ Gen-Fu ■ Hayabusa



LEIFANG
Secret Special Tag Partners ■ Tina ■ Helena ■ Ein



EIN
Secret Special Tag Partners ■ Jann-Lee ■ Kasumi ■ Hayabusa ■ Bass



ANALOGUE FIGHTING

■ A great feature not mentioned in the manual is that the punch/kick commands are analogue, meaning the harder you hit the button, the harder your character hits. There are three degrees of pressure and while tricky at first, this innovative

system rewards dexterous use. You can even create different combos depending how hard you press. In fact, the possibilities seem endless but to start you off we've outlined the initial steps to help you get to grips with analogue fighting.

WAX ON, WAX OFF

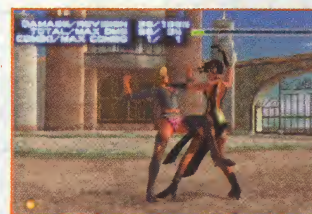
■ The first step is to know which blow from the character's move menu the analogue pressure uses.



■ A light tap has Tina quickly flicking out her fist for a quick jab at her opponent.



■ A firm press sees Tina throwing the equivalent of her powerful Short Range Lariat.



■ A hard press sends Tina into her over-the-top Rolling Elbow manoeuvre. Go girl!

I KNOW KUNG FU

■ Using the knowledge you glean from the above procedure, you can simplify combos. A good example is this Kasumi combo which is normally pulled off using P, P, f+P, f+K.



■ The Kasumi combo starts off as normal with a quick jab...



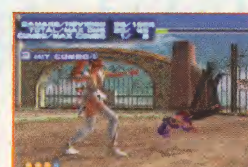
■ ...followed by another quick jab...



■ ...but instead of the f+P, just hit a hard P...



■ ...followed by a hard K, instead of the f+K.



■ Changing the combo to P, P, P, K – pressing hard on the last two hits.

KEY

Making sense of it all...

, = button presses follow each other
+ = press at the same time
f = forward
QCF = down, down/forward, forward in one continuous movement
P = Punch
K = Kick
F = Free

CHEATS EXPRESS

Four pages of life-saving cheats for the game you just haven't been able to polish off. If your game's not here, write in and let us know!

Looney Tunes: Space Race



Half-Life



QUICK TIPS

Nintendo 64



Army Men: Sarge's Heroes 2

■ To play as Vicki, enter (into the code entry screen) the code – wait for it – GRNGRLRX.

Stunt Racer 64

■ Enter your name as:
To ride a snowboard: BUCKYB
To ride a Milk Float: MOOOOO

Meanwhile, for some more in-game shenanigans, enter the following codes on another controller plugged into port two whilst you are playing the game:

A million dollars: B, Z, Z, B, Up, C-Down, Z, Start
Super Blurry Mode: B, Left, Up, Right, Right, Right, A, Start, Start, Z, Right, A, Up, Z, C-Down, Start.
Top Down View: Up, Up, Up, A, Left, A, A, A

Looney Tunes: Space Race



■ Get all the characters and tracks for this wacky kart racer.

■ Enter the following cheats are entered at the Main Menu to unlock the given characters and tracks.

Characters

Foghorn Leghorn:

Right, Right, L2, @, @, Select

Pepe Le Pew:

Left, Right, R1, @, @, Select

Yosemite Sam:

Left, Right, R2, @, @, Select

Sylvester:

Left, Left, L1, @, @, Select

Rocky:

@, Left, R2, @, @, Select

Granny:

@, @, @, L1, R1, Select

Gossamer:

@, @, R2, R1, @, Select

Duck Dodgers:

L2, @, @, @, @, Select

Evil Scientist:

@, @, L2, R2, @, Select

Genie:

@, L1, R1, @, @, Select

Hector:

@, L2, L1, @, @, Select

Tracks

Garden Speedway:

R1, Right, Left, L1, @, Select

Planet X Speedway:

R1, @, @, L2, @, Select

Duck Dodgers Speedway:

@, Left, @, @, R2, Select

Forest Speedway:

@, R2, Left, @, L1, Select

Planet Y:

Right, Left, @, L2, L1, Select

Wackyland:

L1, @, @, R2, @, Select

ACME Factory:

L2, R1, R2, @, @, Select

Looney Tunes: Space Race



■ And here's how to get everything on the Dreamcast version.

■ Select the Cheats option from the Options menu, and fire away to unlock this little lot:

Characters

Porky:

YAVARMINT

Marvin:

REDWAGON

Tracks

ACME 2:

MAROON

Mars 2:

SCUEWBALL

Off World 1:

DURNIDGIT

Off World 2:

PALOOKA

Wild West 1:

HOGGRAVY

Wild West 2:

MACKEREL

Nebula:

MRFUZZY

Galactorama 1:

YOIKS

Galactorama 2:

DODGPARRY

Everything

All Characters:

CHAR

All ACME Events:

3LILBOPS

All Challenges:

MOIDALIZE

All Gallery Items:

MICHIGANJ

Unlimited Turbo:

DUCKAMUCK

Mirror Mode:

SAMRALPH

No Gags:

SUCCOTASH

Half-Life



■ Fancy diddling with your console? Not half.

■ During gameplay, access the console with the ~ // tilda // button, and type:

Adjust gravity (where # is a number

X-Squad



between (-999 and +999999):

sv_gravity#

Auto reload: **+reload**

Manual reload: **-reload**

Increase forwards speed (where # is a number between 0 and 999):

cl_forwardspeed#

Increase backwards speed (where # is a number between 0 and 999):

cl_backwardspeed#

Increase Strafe speed (where # is a number between 0 and 999):

cl_sidespeed

Select level (where # is the name of the map): **Changelevel#**

Set the C4 Timer (where # is a number between 1000 and 1000):

Mp_c4timer#

The Phantom Menace



■ All the cheats you need in one handy Debug Mode.

■ To unearth the Debug Mode (were you can select your level, opt for some handy Invincibility etc), highlight Options at the main menu and press:

△, ○, Left, L1, R2, ○, ○, Left.

Then Hold L1 + Select + △.

Nice one, Luke.

NFL 2001



■ Cheat codes to help you celebrate in style.

■ To perform different Touchdown Celebrations, hold the following button combinations after you've scored a goal. Or a touchdown, or what ever it is...

Hip Thrust:

L1 + ○

Jump Spike:

L1 + ○

Say A Prayer:

L1 + △

Spike The Football:

L1 + ×

Shoulder Shake:

L1 + R1

Slam Dunk:

L1 + R2

X-Squad



■ Everybody deserves a promotion, we reckon.

NFL 2001



■ You know the Title Screen? Enter the following therein to brown nose your way up the ranks.

Private (Michaels 9mmS and 99 clips): ○, ○, △

Sergeant (ditto plus Taylor M82 and no weight limit): △, ○, ○

Lieutenant (ditto plus Level 2 shield): R1, L2, L1, R2

Captain (ditto plus radar): ○, R1, ○, L1, t, R2

Major (ditto plus Level 3 shield, level 3 sensor): L2, ○, R2, △, L1, ○, R1

Colonel (ditto plus beginner level of all weapons): △, ○, ○, ○, △, ○

General (ditto plus intermediate level of all weapons): L1, L1, L2, L2 R1, R1, R2, R2

Master (ditto plus Master level of all weapons): ○, ○, ○, ○, △, ○, ○, ○, ○, ○

San Francisco Rush 2049



■ Cheats? Don't all Rush at once.

■ From the main menu, highlight Options, press and hold L+R+C-Up+C-Right then tap Z. This will pop up the cheat menu. Now, scroll down

the cheat menu, highlight the cheat you're after and press:

All Parts: L+R+Z, C-Down, C-Left, C-Up, C-Right, L+R+Z

Brakes: C-Down, C-Down, L+R+C-Up, C-Up, C-Up, L+R+C-Down

Invincibility: C-Right, L, R, R, L, C-Left+C-Down+Z

Invisible Car: C-Up, C-Down, C-Left, C-Right, L, R, Z

Invisible Track: C-Right, C-Right, C-Right, L+R+C-Left, C-Left, C-Left, L+R+C-Right

Mass: R+C-Down, L+C-Up, R+C-Left, L+C-Right.

Super Tyres: Z, Z, L, R, C-Up, C-Up, C-Left, C-Right, C-Down.

Twisted Edge



■ 10 points for ingenuity here, at the very least.

■ Bit odd, this one. To get the codes to work, access the Sound Menu. Now, to activate the relevant cheat, set the Speech, FX, Sound Test, and Music volumes as shown, then press the relevant button combinations.

Players

All Players:
OFF, 4, 1, 2, C-Right+C-Down

QUICK TIPS

Game Boy Color



Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX

■ To unlock everything, simply enter the password R6KZBS7L1CTQMH.

Armorines: Project S.W.A.R.M.

■ Enter "BBBBBBBB" as your password and this will enable the cheat mode.

Harvest Moon 2

■ For a quick way to get back to your farm, go to the area below the Hot Springs and run into the second tree. Except! It's a teleport! Hurrah. This is dead handy for carrying back berries and things.

Super Mario Bros DX

■ To fly over any level, press Pause, then press A, A, A, B, B, B. To play as Luigi, simply press Select at the map screen. For unlimited continues, hold down A at the Game Over screen. And for unlimited lives, as soon as you die, hold A until the map screen appears.

Pokémon Puzzle Challenge

■ To crank up the maximum speed to 99 in the Marathon Mode, first turn on the game, and then, just after Pikachu beams at you, press B, A, Left and Left.

Boards

Art Boards: ON, 5, 1, 3, C-Left+C-Up

Board Only: OFF, 7, 5, 2, Z+C-Down

BOSS Board: OFF, 6, 3, 4, C-Up

Midway Board: ON, 8, 4, 5, C-Left

No Board: ON, 0, 8, 4, C-Up+C-Left+, C-Right



QUICK TIPS

Dreamcast



Star Wars: Demolition

■ And guess what? To unlock all the characters, go to the Preferences screen and press and hold L + R. A code entry screen will pop up, which is your cue to enter Watto_Shop for the full selection of characters.

No One Lives Forever



Right, Right, Right, Down
Overhead view: Up, Up, Up, A, Left, A, A, A
Infinite Restart Credits: Z, Right, Z, Right, Right, Start, Z, A, Right, Z, Start.
All GT2 Cars: Z, Right, Z, Z, Z, B, C-Down, A, Right, Start.

Meanwhile, to race around a mirror of a track, select it with the Z trigger instead of the A button.



Turok 3: Shadow Of Oblivion



■ Whatever the difficulty level, we can assist you.

Enter: (as passwords, you dummy)
Unlimited Ammo: ZXLCPMZ
Unlimited Lives: FJVHDCX
Skip Level: XCDSDFS

Or try these:

Easy Difficulty

Level 2:
Level 3:
Level 4:
Level 5:

SDFLMSF
 DVLFDDZM
 VFDSGPD
 CSDJKFD

Medium Difficulty

Level 2:
Level 3:
Level 4:
Level 5:

VLXCZVF
 DPSCVCX
 ZMGFSCM
 HWKLFYS

Tracks

Easy Tracks: ON, 7, 2, 6, L
Hard Tracks: ON, 5, 2, 4, Z
Canada: ON, 4, 0, 7, Z+C-Up+C-Left
Mirror Tracks: ON, 7, 6, 6, L+R
Normal Tracks: OFF, 3, 5, 6, R

Ghosts

Ghost 1: ON, 4, 6, 5, L+R
Ghost 2: OFF, 0, 8, 3, R+C-Up+C-Down
Ghost in Replay: ON, 8, 8, 7, L+R+C-Down

Misc

Tiny players: ON, 7, 7, 5, L
Naked Man: OFF, 6, 4, 6, C-Left+C-Right+R

No One Lives Forever



■ No one lives forever. Except, of course, you can with these cheats.

Press T, and type:

God Mode: mpimyourfater
Refill Health: mpdrdntz
Refill Armour: mpwonderbra
Full Armour Options: mpyoulooklikeyouneedamonkey
Full Weapon Upgrades: Mpgoottech
All Weapons: Mpmimimi
Infinite Ammo: Mpwegotdeathstar
Complete Mission: Mpmaphole
Third Person View: Mpasscam
Show Position: mppos

San Francisco Rush 2049



■ Level codes? We'll take you all the way to level 9.

Level 2:
Level 3:
Level 4:
Level 5:
Level 6:
Level 7:
Level 8:
Level 9:

MADTOWN
 FATCITY
 SFRISCO
 GASWRKZ
 SKYWAYZ
 INDSTR
 NEOCHGO
 RIPTIDE

Turok 3: Shadow Of Oblivion



World Driver Championship



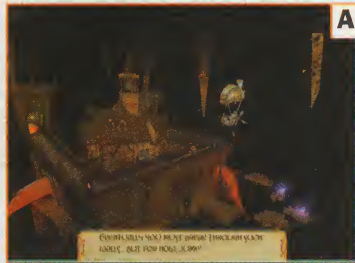
■ Get yourself a head start with these cheats.

■ To get these to work, you'll want to plug in a second controller, and use it to enter the following whilst in-game:

Blurry Mode: B, Left, Up, Right, Right, Right, A, Start, Start, Z, Right, A, Up, Z, Bottom-C, Start
Red Skid Marks: B, Left, Up, Down,

San Francisco Rush 2049





Alice

Hard Difficulty

Level 2: CJSDFPSF
Level 3: CMSDKCD
Level 4: SPFPWLD
Level 5: TPDFQGB

Alice



■ **Navigate the dark wonderland with ease.**

■ Choose Game Options from the Setting menu, and then click on Console. In the game, press ~ (// that's tilda), and then type in one of the following codes:

God Mode and Infinite Weapon Energy:

god
All Weapons: wuss
All Weapons and Ammo: give all
Walk through walls: noclip
#'s worth of Health: health #
Invisibility: notarget

■ To select a particular level, type "map" and then one of the following names:

centipede1, centipede2, facade, fortress1, fortress2, funhouse, garden1, garden2, garden3, garden4, grounds1, grounds2, gvilleage, hedge1, hedge2, hedge3, jlair1, jlair2, keep, pandemonium, potears1, potears2, potears3, qlair, rchess, skool1, skool2, tower1, tower2, tower3, utemple, wchess1, wchess2, wforest

Spider-Man



■ **Get your Spidey Senses tingling.**

Level codes:
Venom Defeated: GVBFC



Lizard defeated: QVCLF
Lab: G-FGN

Disney's The Jungle Book



■ **Tame the mighty jungle.**

■ To skip levels, enter your password as a carefully-typed "BMHG".

Gunman Chronicles



■ **Useful tips for this great shooter.**

■ To enable a handy cheat mode, you have to load up the game slightly differently than normal. Instead of the normal procedure, then, pull up the Start Menu, select Run, and enter the following:

C:\sierra\gunman\gunman.exe -dev -console (adapting it accordingly if you happened to install Gunman to a different directory.)

You'll now have the word "Console" included in main menu. During gameplay, press ~ (//tilda//) and pick your way through this little lot:

God Mode: God
Walk through walls: Noclip
Every weapon and ammo:

Impulse 101

Warp to given map (see below):
Map#

Give item (see below): Give#

■ Item-wise, substitute # for any of the following:

weapon_fists, weapon_gausspistol, weapon_shotgun, weapon_minigun, weapon_beamgun, weapon_dml, weapon_SPchemicalgun, ammo_gaussclip, ammo_buckshot, ammo_minigunclip, ammo_beamgunclip, ammo_dmlclip, ammo_chemical, item_healthkit, item_armor, player_armor, vehicle_tank.

■ And here are all the map names: takeoff, rusted, meltdown, highnoon, frontier, cinematic1, cinematic2, cinematic3, cinematic4, city1a, city1b, city2a, city2b, city3a, city3b, end1, end2, mayan0a, mayan0b, mayan1, mayan3a, mayan4, mayan6, mayan8, rebar0a, rebar0b, rebar2a, rebar2b, rebar2c, rebar2d, rebar2e, rebar2f, rebar2g, rebar2h, rebar2i, rebar2j, rebar2k, rebar2l, rebar3b, rebar3d, rebar3e, rust1, rust2a, rust2b, rust3a, rust4a, rust4b, rust4c, rust5a, rust6a, rust6b, rust6c, rust6d, rust7a, rust7b, rust7c, rust7d, rust7e, rust8a, rust9a, west1, west2, west3a, west3b, west4a, west4b, west5b, west6a, west6b, west6c, west6d, west6e.

QUICK TIPS

PlayStation



Moto Racer World Tour

■ To unlock Everything (that's every track, every bike and every mode in the game) press: @, @, @, @, Up, Up, Left, at the Main Menu. Sorted? Not half, mate.

Star Wars: Demolition

■ To unlock all the characters, go to the Preferences screen and press and hold L1 + R1. A code entry screen will pop up, which is your cue to enter Watto_Shop for the full selection of characters.

Driver

■ At the good old main menu, press:

Inverted Screen: R2, R2, R1, L2, L1, R2, L2, L1, R2, L2, L2, R2, L1, R2, L1, R2, L1, L1

Miniature Cars: R1, R2, R1, R2, L1, L2, R1, R2, L1, R1, L2, L2, L2

No Police: L1, L2, R1, R1, R1, R1, L2, L2, R1, R1, L1, L1, R2

Rear wheel steering:

R1, R1, R1, R2, L2, R1, R2, L2, L1, R2, R1, L2, L1

Stilts: R2, L2, R1, R2, L2, L1, R2, R2, L2, L2, L1, R2, R1

View credits: L1, L2, R1, R2, L1, R1, R2, L2, R1, R2, L1, L2, R1



Gunman Chronicles





**KEEP
AHEAD
of the
game**

Get Official UK PlayStation Magazine every month for the very latest news and reviews. The only magazine with a playable demo disc featuring the hottest new games.

coffee clinic

Getting kitted out, fighting scary-arsed monsters or solving your mind-bending problems, it's all the same to us... get absolutely tanked up on coffee and thrash those control pads.

Too busy admiring the jugs, are we?

I've heard you can get some of the extra costumes on *Dead or Alive 2* (PlayStation2) by scoring high points in Survival mode. Trouble is I can't get really high scores. Do you have any tips?

Simon Jones, Barnstaple

Coffee Clinic suggests:

First, you can get all the costumes by playing through the Story mode with each individual lots of times (and we mean lots). In Survival mode, beaten opponents cough up icons, some are specific to individual characters, so make sure you grab them as they'll bump up points and also fill the Collection screen. To get a really high score make sure you nab every icon possible, plus if you jump on a floored opponent an extra icon pops out giving extra points when collected. Lastly, hit a character against a danger zone area and for a short while every hit scores bonus points on top of their usual value.

Zombie shuffle blues

Have you got any tips for *Resident Evil* (PlayStation) as I'm finding it difficult to get by with only the Baretta as a weapon.

Andrew Webster, Grimsby

Coffee Clinic suggests:

By the sounds of it you haven't come across the ballsier weaponry yet, which means you must still be quite near the beginning. In that case, these two tips will help with zombies and should progress you on comfortably until you find the major hardware. First, aim high when shooting zombies and you'll take their heads off, making life much easier. Better still, many of the

DEAD OR ALIVE 2



zombies can be avoided by simply running around them, saving you bullets and time.

Dodgy rockets and evil bosses

On *Resident Evil 3* I'm stuck on the bit outside of the Clock Tower where you meet Nemesis with a rocket launcher.

Tim Goudie, South Garston

Coffee Clinic suggests:

This is tough and you'll probably need a couple of goes to get it right. Manoeuvre past Nemesis into the courtyard as soon as possible to give yourself room. Your principle weapon should be grenades (fire or freeze), positioning yourself at about medium distance from Nemesis. The key is dodging his moves and then immediately returning fire – obviously

this is the tricky part, but once you get the hang of it you shouldn't be stuck for much longer. And remember: if you get a full in the face rocket, heal immediately.

On the mend...

On *Broken Sword 2*, I'm on Skull Island in the jungle and I can't get past it. Any ideas?

Kevin Hayes, Seafal

Coffee Clinic suggests:

We think you mean Zombie Island. Okay, deep breath... On the cliff at the start, take the path leading to the forest, pick a reed, continue until you find a hole with an animal in, then use the reed on the hole. Now find your way back to the beginning of the paths on the cliff. Take the path you haven't used yet, use the poison dart+reed on the wild boar, continue on and you'll come to a rock needle formation. Use the fishing net on the vines of the needle and throw the marker on the top. Then back up and take the path that's opened up by the boar until you reach a panoramic view. Now use the theodolite to reveal all and you can move on.

To bean or not to bean

In *Zelda: Majora's Mask* there are holes for the magic beans half way up a wall. I've tried to plant beans but nothing happens, so how do I get the beans in?

Trevor Dyer, Bridgwater

Coffee Clinic suggests:

You don't. Blunt but true. Catch some beetles in a bottle, release them directly beneath the hole and good things happen. Now you know not to presume anything in this great game!



Stuck somewhere in a game and feel like there's nowhere to turn? Stick your problem onto this cutout-and-send form, and we'll solve it quicker than you can say Nescafé Gold Blend.

Name _____

Address _____

Game _____

System _____

I'm stuck on the bit where... _____

Continue on separate sheet if needed

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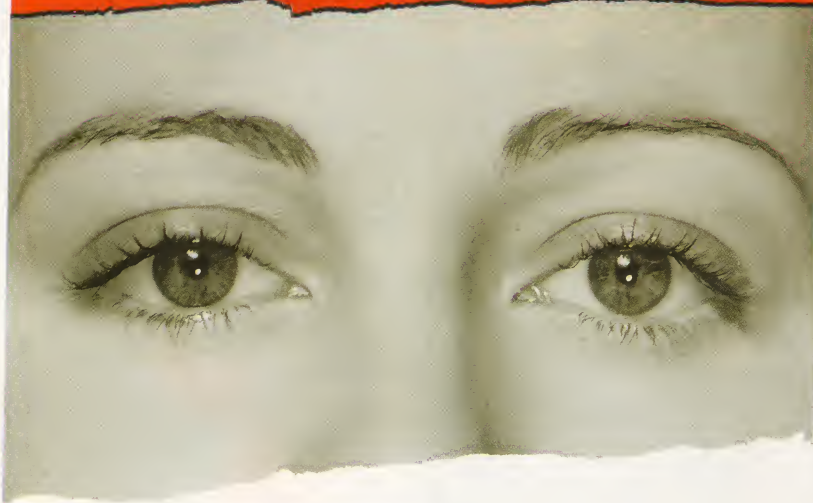
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CA GAMES are 11 years old with this issue of VideoGamer - Charlie is a gaming veteran and is extremely proud of having what many think of as the best gaming store in Scotland. Currently in stock and selling furiously are the screens for PSOne at £99.99 - come into the store or have purchases delivered to your door - CA Games have a huge following for mail order and incredibly proud of the service they provide.

As an import game specialist, **Another World** stocks a vast range of import titles, from rare classics such as Radiant Silvergun on the Japanese Saturn to the latest hot titles like The Bouncer on PS2. Our Mail Order department ships every day to countries all over the world, as well as receiving daily shipments of games and consoles from Japan and the USA. You can contact Another World on 01782 279294 or 0498 897770 or visit our website at www.anotherworld.co.uk.

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John from **Funhouse** always makes the most of giving his gamers the best service in the country - not only does he guarantee next day delivery on all online purchases, he now also offers same-day game delivery if you live within a 10 mile radius of his store in Crayford, Kent. John has every PS2 game in stock and is possibly the first games store to offer 2nd hand PS2 games - ring him for prices.

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Video Drome

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US and them

■ I read your Star Letter, 'States of affairs', in issue two, about the US presidential election and was left wondering: so *what?* I live in the UK, have no say in who becomes the next US president, and couldn't care less whether Al Gore bans violent games in the US or not. If he wants to slap a ban on games like *Soldier Of Fortune*, I don't see the relevance to UK gamers.

'Chiggs', via e-mail

■ Firstly, the point the letter raised was do America's problems with violence stem simply from games like *Soldier of Fortune*? (And, also, why Gore's campaign team focused on violent games and not the ease of firearm availability in the US.) Secondly, and in answer to your question, if America decides violent videogames are the cause of its woes, and *ban* them, the UK will follow suit, *guaranteed*: politicians here need little encouragement – as they do in the US – to neatly sweep the issue of violence under the carpet, without having to work too hard at finding out the cause. So, actually, what happens in the US will have quite a bearing on you.

SCART's content?

■ The PS2 SCART problem, then. After getting my machine and realising it only came with poxy composite leads, I popped down the shops and got a SCART lead. My happiness was short-lived: the games were fine, but the DVD playback was green. When I took the lead back to the shops, they said *everyone* was returning SCART leads because of this problem. So, you described *why* Sony have done this in last month's News Express, but will they actually be bringing out a lead that works with both games *and* DVD?

Rob Sutton, via e-mail

■ We'd like to say 'yes', but to be honest, we doubt it. We can't imagine Sony putting time and money into coming up

with a lead that by-passes their *own* DVD security – especially as it would send out the message that they got it wrong in the first place. However, that doesn't mean that 'third-party' peripheral specialists might not. In fact, we've spoken to a couple and they reckon they've come up with a SCART solution – one of which we've reviewed in Top Gear (see page 64). Still not ideal, but at least there's some light at the end of the tunnel.

Criminal record

■ Does N64 really have a "criminal lack of games" (Letters, issue two)? What is the right number of games for a system? If there are 20 games due in the first half of 2001, that's three a month, which is okay by me. I'm currently playing *Zelda: Majora's Mask*, *Mario Golf* and *Perfect Dark*, so I've got plenty to keep me busy.

Gary Ransley-Miller, via e-mail



■ *Zelda: Majora's Mask*: A brilliant example of N64 gaming... shame there's few others.

■ The fact that you're playing *Mario Golf*, a game released in 1999, *Perfect Dark*, a game released in June, and *Majora's Mask*, frankly the *only* N64 game worth buying at Christmas, is telling. We're not criticising the *machine* (what other system, after all, can lay claim to games like *Mario*, *Zelda* and *GoldenEye*?) but over the past four years, the N64 has struggled to entice enough important developers away from PlayStation, and 2001's release schedule is desolate. Only six games in the first half of this year, two

of which, *Kirby 64* and *Excitebike 64*, we're not even convinced will come out here (they're boxed up and finished in the States, so if they were going to be released, surely they would have been already?). So, in answer to your question – "what is the right number of games for a system?" – we're not sure, but certainly not *six*. We're big fans of the N64, and have spent *hours* on *Perfect Dark* and *Majora's Mask*, but unless Nintendo break with tradition and release their next console on time – Gamecube is pencilled in for 'autumn' – it's going to be a bit of a gap year for Nintendo fans. Shame, that.

Three and you

■ How come, in your 'Reviewed next issue in VideoGamer' section at the back of the mag, you featured two games, *Excitebike 64* and *Moto GP* that didn't actually appear in issue three?

Tony Maltown, via e-mail

■ Yep, sorry about that. Every month, we attempt to make sure that every game we feature at the back of the magazine we will have in for review the next issue. At the time of going to press, *Excitebike* and *Moto GP* were scheduled for a January release. Shortly after, *Moto GP* was delayed until February and *Excitebike* until June (though this is still up for debate – see above for more details). This, however, will happen very rarely as we're careful only to carry previews of games that we've been promised won't slip, or shift in terms of release date.

Train in the arse

■ So, I pre-ordered my PS2 from Dixons as soon as phone lines opened. Several weeks later, I got confirmation of the delivery date, sat back, took the day off work... and it never arrived. I rang them a couple of days later, and they said it had arrived on the day I was promised – funny, I hadn't seen it. The second call I got was to tell me the

IN SHORT ON ISSUE THREE

■ Will Sony become the next Ian Beale?

Marcus Vass, Bexhill on Sea

■ Nah. Pauline Fowler.

■ We could soon be going into our Microsoft kitchens and making a cup of tea on our Microsoft kettles.

Dave Marsden, via e-mail

■ Yep, we could. (But, let's be honest, probably not.)

■ I was playing PS2 game *TimeSplitters* and realised that you can actually remove the heads of some of the enemies. Brilliant.

Alan Houghton, via e-mail

■ Yeah, undoubtedly the best bit of the entire game. (If you're a crazed, blood-thirsty lunatic, that is.)

■ Question is, is that funny ha ha or funny odd?

Tim Popolasous, via e-mail

■ Definitely funny odd.

STAR LETTER

Every month, the Star Letter receives pads, steering wheels and more courtesy of Radica...

RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE

■ So, according to your News Express section, Sega are considering developing a *Sonic* game for Game Boy Advance and their deadly rivals Nintendo, and there's rumours of them concentrating their attention solely on arcade games. Does this signal an intent by them to disband with manufacturing hardware to just simply concentrate on developing software for other consoles?

Let's examine the facts: Dreamcast has *brilliant* games – and 75% of them are from Sega themselves – but not enough people own the machine. And with PS2 appearing like a steaming great juggernaut on the horizon, I guess the thinking is that it would be as good a time as any for Sega to concentrate on development only. If this is the case, it would be a surprising capitulation by Sega, who have been head-to-head with Nintendo and, latterly, Sony for *years*. (And, I can't help feeling a little sad that, for Sega, it would end like this.)

The flipside would be that Sega's games would be seen by *more* people – and, in the case of *Jet Set Radio* and *Shenmue*, this would be ideal, as they're both exceptional. (I've been playing them all Christmas and well into the new year and love them more than anything – probably even my wife.)

Michael Lowry-Philips, Manchester

■ Sega aren't about to give Dreamcast the elbow, although even *they* would probably admit that it's not sold as well as they would have liked. That said, PS2 represents a significant threat to them, as does Xbox later next year (and, to a lesser extent, Gamecube), so they'd be foolish not to constantly reappraise their situation. Which is why they *will* bring *Sonic* to Game Boy Advance – but only because GBA isn't in direct competition with any of their machines. Important, that.



■ *Jet Set Radio*: a brilliant Dreamcast game from Sega – and not the last.

MICHAEL WINS... A GAMESTER DREAMCAST PAD, A STEERING WHEEL COURTESY OF RADICA AND A COPY OF THE TOP *METROPOLIS STREET RACER*!

PS2 was 20 miles away in the depot of a parcel company that refuses to deliver at weekends. So, I'm about to embark on a nice 40 mile round trip to find my PS2, which I'm just hoping is as ordered, though – as you can probably understand – I'm not exactly holding my breath. All in all, a disaster.

Niall Porter, via e-mail

■ We had, ooooh, probably around 20 letters and e-mails from disgruntled PS2 owners who had big, *big* problems with Dixons. To be fair, Sony dictate numbers

and delivery dates to each individual store but you also mentioned in your letter about Dixons being unable to redirect the PS2 to any of your local stores, or a new address, i.e. your work address, which seems absolutely ludicrous. If it makes any difference, at least 35 other *VideoGamer* readers had similar pre-order problems.

Shelf space ace

■ I was wandering around my local Tesco's store just before Christmas when – shocked to my very core – I

saw PlayStation2s *on the shelves*. (Not just the boxes, mind, the *actual things*.) I'd already pre-ordered mine (although hadn't received it at the time), so I couldn't buy one, despite the fact that it was there, on the shelves, *waiting to be bought*. What the hell's going on, then? Surely Sony haven't gone and put them on general sale already, have they?

Mark Woodcock, Peterborough

■ Yeah, a bit of a bizarre one, this. Tesco somehow acquired 2,500 machines from 'Northern Europe', which they then evenly distributed among their five Tesco Extra stores (big old hypermarket-style versions of the normal Tesco stores) in Newcastle, Inverness, Cardiff, Watford and your home town of Peterborough. Quite how they managed to find two and a half thousand PS2s in a wintry Norwegian warehouse is a mystery. Sony, understandably, weren't too chuffed, but Tesco were keen to stress that the machines were legitimate, and exactly the same as the pre-order models.



■ *The Third Place*: 10 on the weird scale even by David Lynch's considerable standards.

Place your bets

■ Can you please explain what the *hell* *The Third Place* is all about? Some duck that can speak, and a bloke whose head floats off and joins the body of another person? I consider myself a relatively intelligent guy, but...

Ollie Martin, via e-mail

■ Welcome... to... the... third... place... (Do you think anyone noticed that we haven't have got the foggiest? – Ed)



CONTACT US

■ We've got prizes on the go for anyone who writes in and gets their letter printed. So, get scribbling on the following subjects: what's the verdict on how Xbox looks? Do you think it's got the games to compete with PS2? What games are you looking forward to in 2001? Why? What do you think about Game Boy Advance? Write in and tell us!

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VideoGamer

February #04

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REVIEWED NEXT ISSUE

The pick of the games we'll be reviewing in the very next issue of VideoGamer...

PHANTASY STAR ONLINE



■ Could this online role-playing game be the next big thing?

BANJO-TOOIE



■ The loveable bear and bird duo return to the N64.

UNREAL TOURNAMENT



■ One of the best PC shooters ever now on PS2 and Dreamcast.

PHANTASY STAR ONLINE

The Dreamcast's most ambitious project yet...

Online role-playing games have been something of success on PC over the last few years, allowing human players to join a party and take on quests. According to people in the know, it's the next big thing. And to prove it, here's Sega's stab at something similar: *Phantasy Star Online* is the first console RPG to be playable on the Internet and it's from the makers of *Sonic the Hedgehog*, so it should be good.

Simply send an email to the three other members of your team and set a time you want to meet in the game. Once you've met up, off you go. The story concerns a futuristic culture's desperate mission to leave its dying homeworld and set up on a new planet. Two ships set off, one arriving

first to clear the way for the second. But something goes wrong and contact is lost with the first ship – it's your job to find out what's happened.

Communication with your team-mates is done via a clever system of signs and symbols to represent words. You can choose to use a series of pre-set phrases to talk to your team members – these are automatically translated into the relevant language, so you can play with people from anywhere in the world.

The actual main quest itself isn't that big – certainly nothing on the scale of the *Final Fantasy* games. However, this isn't really the point as there are loads of mini quests for you to take on – but completing these helps you in the main quest. The game is also less focused on exploration and story and more on the multiplayer

experience. In fact, this isn't a traditional RPG at all; the game is divided up into very linear levels that feature a boss character at the end.

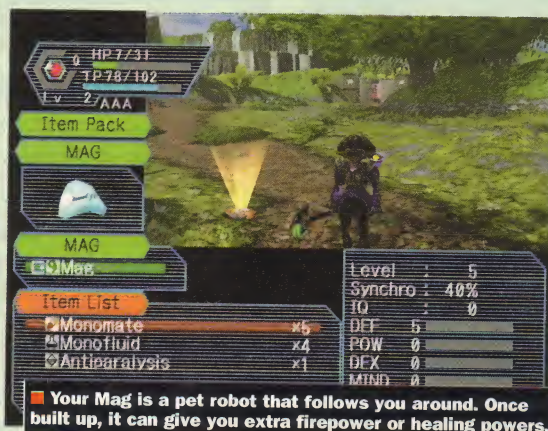
But don't worry, if you haven't got your DC hooked up to the Internet – you can still play a single-player version. Trouble is, you'll be missing out on what could be one of the videogame events of the year.



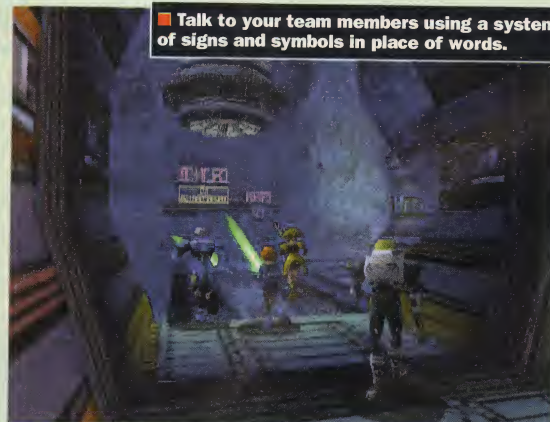
Will it catch on? Check out our verdict in next issue's review



■ Monsters usually come in three flavours: easy, medium and rock.



■ Your Mag is a pet robot that follows you around. Once built up, it can give you extra firepower or healing powers.

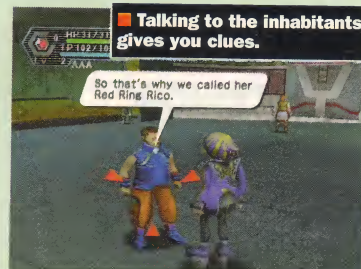


■ Talk to your team members using a system of signs and symbols in place of words.

■ The fighting system's kind of like a real time version of *Final Fantasy*'s.

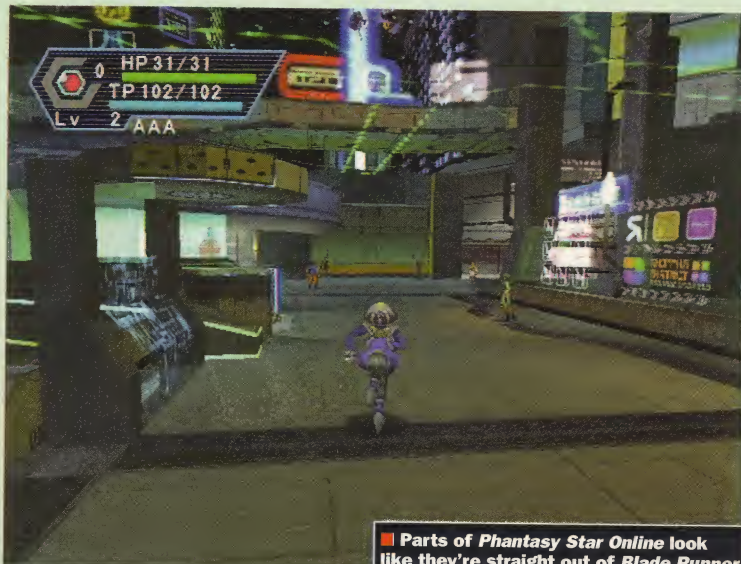


■ Talking to the inhabitants gives you clues.



■ Items that you can't use can be sold or traded with other characters.





■ Parts of *Phantasy Star Online* look like they're straight out of *Blade Runner*.

BEST BIT SO FAR!

I'm not a number!

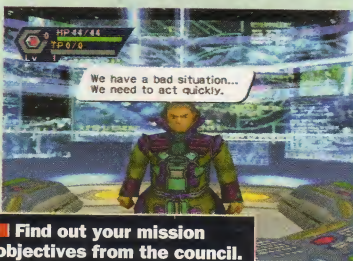
How do you give yourself an identity in *Phantasy Star*? Simple: design your own character. There are three main character classes to choose from (each with different skills) and you can customise each one with different heads, clothes and so on. Then, using a crosshair, change the proportions, size and weight of your character to give him, her or it a unique appearance.

ACTER CREATION

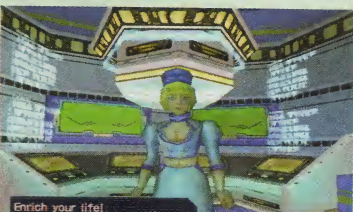
- FACE
- HAIR
- COSTUME
- SKIN COLOR
- PROPORTION
- CHARACTER NAME
- AUTO
- OK



■ The larger the creatures, the tougher they are. Stands to reason...



■ Find out your mission objectives from the council.



■ Extra missions are available from the Hunter's Guild.



■ Magic users have powerful attacks but are weak when attacked themselves.



■ Smash crates to get power-ups and items – you know the drill.

■ You'll be glad of the company of your team when surrounded!



BANJO-TOOIE

The bear and the bird return for their last N64 outing.

Banjo-Tooie sees the welcome return of Banjo the bear and Kazooie the bird in another huge, fun, lovingly created platform/puzzle adventure.

The good news is that it looks like everything that made original game *Banjo-Kazooie* great has been tweaked for the sequel. And we mean *everything*. *Banjo-Tooie* dwarfs the first instalment, bosses are monstrous, gorgeous panoramic scenery takes your breath away, there are plenty of new transformations (changing from character to character – a neat feature of the first game) and side-splitting humour is in constant supply.

There are new moves between the animal pair, even going solo when needed, and Mumbo, a Shaman-like wizard, jumps into the action as well,

but for the most part, the feel and execution of the characters remain faithful to the original.

However, it's not until you look at *Banjo-Tooie's* structure that the subtle changes dawn on you. First and foremost, it has a stronger puzzle element than its predecessor,

which subsequently encourages more exploration and discovery, rather than a straightforward platform affair. Developers Rare have also adjusted the item collecting element as they felt there was too much backtracking and repetition when searching for Notes, Jiggies and Jinjos (we kid you not) in the first game. And the new design is such that when you reach a section in the game that requires a specific item, for example a Glowblow – which replaces the morphing Mumbo Tokens of

Banjo-Kazooie – the item will be close to hand. Simple and obvious, perhaps, but it adds to the overall immediacy, fluidity and fun of the game.

On top of all the tweaking, Rare have also included tons of mini-games in the main game which when completed are saved in the multiplayer

slot on the cartridge. The mini-games are a varied bunch but our favourite to date is the *Perfect Dark* inspired first-person shooter.

It's their last outing on N64 but it looks like the twosome are leaving with the biggest of bangs.

**Animal magic or Mumbo jumbo?
Check out our review next issue**



BEST BIT SO FAR!

Clued up

It has to be the puzzles. They're involving, fun and reward you with something nice. For example, near the beginning you'll notice some huge doors. The puny duo can't move them but change into Mumbo, work a bit of magic on the Golden Statue head near the doors and a colossal statue rises from the ground which you take control of. Now just kick in the doors. Lovely.



■ Banjo's morphing antics are great, especially this neat jeep.



■ This Indian squaw can morph Banjo into all manner of things.



■ Warp points enable Banjo to take plenty of short cuts.



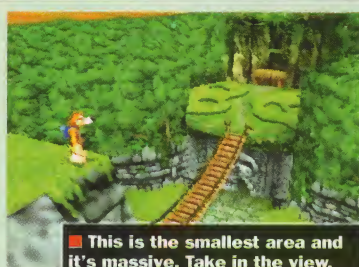
■ Banjo-Tooie is littered with mini-games, including football.



■ There's plenty of four-player action to open up and this take on *GoldenEye* is superb.



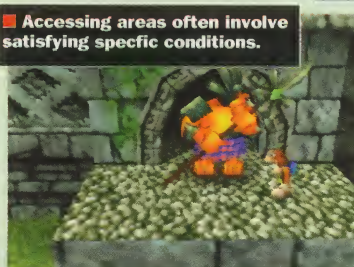
■ Sussing the right tactics is the key to beating the bosses.



■ This is the smallest area and it's massive. Take in the view.



■ The bosses are huge. See that speck on the rim to the right of the bosses jaw? That's you!



■ Accessing areas often involve satisfying specific conditions.



■ Enemies are many, varied and as comical as you like.

UNREAL TOURNAMENT

A PC classic gets the PlayStation2 treatment.

The premise of *Unreal Tournament* is simple: hunting and killing. Everyone takes on everyone else in a fight to the death, or rather a fight until the 'frag limit' (pre-set death toll) is reached. You play through each level taking on tougher and tougher opponents until you're eventually crowned champion. But there's a lot more to *UT* than that.

Much of the game focuses on team play, where one team of either human or computer players face off against another. You may already have heard about Capture the Flag, a style of game which is popular online. As the name suggests, you have to capture your opponent's flag while defending your own. In *UT*, there's also a game called Domination, where you fight over three specific areas of a level, the idea being to capture and defend them for a set time. But best of all are the Assault missions. Here you

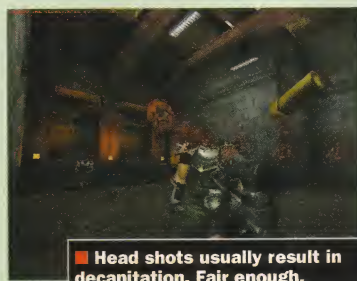
have various objectives – such as storm a boat or blow up the engine – one team has to defend, the other attack.

There are plenty of weapons to use: sniper rifles and rocket launchers come as standard in this type of game. What

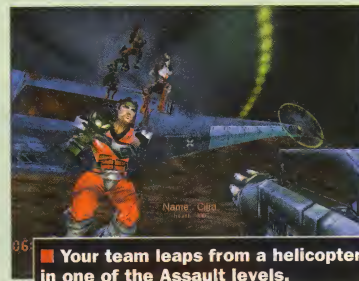
UT does differently is give each weapon a primary and secondary fire, making the gameplay much more subtle than, say, *Quake III*. One particularly destructive weapon can be fired in a wide burst for close combat or as a single shot for long range; the key is to know which weapon's best for each situation.

Naturally, there's a nifty multiplayer game for up to four players, but you can have eight players by using an I-Link cable to hook up two PS2s. *UT* is also set for release on Dreamcast at the same time and looks as though it will be identical to the PS2 version – in other words just as good as the PC game. Console gaming is about to get a lot more violent...

Find out if UT makes the grade in next month's review



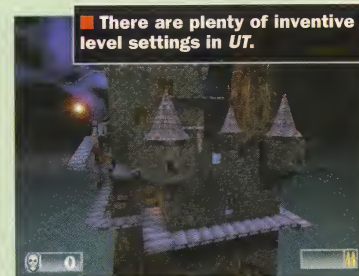
■ Head shots usually result in decapitation. Fair enough.



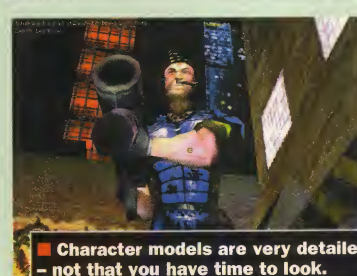
■ Your team leaps from a helicopter in one of the Assault levels.



■ Portals warp you around levels quickly but can get you into trouble...



■ There are plenty of inventive level settings in *UT*.



■ Character models are very detailed – not that you have time to look.

BEST BIT SO FAR!

As nature intended

If you want to make good use of the PlayStation2's USB ports, you can play *Unreal Tournament* the way it was intended – with a mouse and keyboard. All you have to do is connect up the USB-compatible peripherals and the PlayStation2 will automatically recognise them. You'll find that using the mouse will enable you to be much more accurate with your shooting.



■ Computer-controlled 'bots' are pretty smart – they'll change their tactics according to the state of play.



■ The sniper rifle is difficult to use but it's highly effective.

Friday 9th February 2001

Classified Advertisements

Alexandria Herald 30



EVIL SEEKING GOOD

DEVOTED male, young 50, sword in hand and in full battle dress. Let me be your knight in rusting armour. Seeks professional lady, stereoscopic vision not a necessity. **Tel No. (Alexandria) 125 55567.**

18YRS old brunette with varied interests seeks fun loving male. **Tel No. 4436723**

SPECIAL looking lady likes cooking and eating. Seeks frogs for short-term relationship. Yum-yum. **(lunch) Box 774**

OUTGOING happy lady, nice looking, young at heart, 50, no ties, disillusioned. Still optimistic. Seeking genuine, adventurous male. Fresno. **Tel. No. 4571128**

ATTRACTIVE N/S, professional Orc, no ties, seeks professional Dwarf, 150-200yrs, for friendship and possible LTR. **Box 572**

CONFUSED male, dark skin, yellow eyes, wears straw hat WLTm young lady to help him discover the meaning of life. **Box 446**

SEIFER 23 yrs old, from Fisherman's Horizon, WLTm lady 18-25 for friendship and poss LTR. **Cleyra. Tel No. 4256772**

JUST FRIENDSHIP

YOUNG 183yr old Troll seeks 19yr old Elf for fun and games. **Box 223**

SHARE my castle in the clouds. 82 yrs old genuine prince seeks princess to rule kingdom of my heart. No time wasters. **Burmecia. Tel. No. 2235674**

BI Fairy would like to meet other fairies with similar interests. Likes spider's webs, acorn fashion and clubbing. **Burmecia. Box 345**

SENSITIVE attractive lonely demon would like to put aside violent youth and settle down with female demon. Likes opera, nights in and knitting. **Box 732**

TALL giant (100ft) would like to meet similarly tall lady for fun. Likes smashing towns, golden eggs and the blood of an Englishman. Own cave. **Box 516**

FRIENDLY easy going Evil Mage would like to meet lady Mage for potentially magic relationship. Likes chess, toasted sandwiches and Jungle. **Cleyra. Tel No. 456784**

SHAPELY lady Troll with GSOH seeks blue-eyed tactile Orc for adventurous under the bridge related fun. **Box 242**

SINGLE white princess, 16yrs old, seeks adventurous man/monkey ready to save the world. Likes long country walks, meeting people and witchcraft. **Tel No. (Alexandria) 555 55555**

SHY lonely dwarf seeking professional giant for fun, good times and possibly more. **Box 490**

DWARFS SEEKING GIANTS

ATTRACTIVE curvy, 80 yrs young lady with power of life and death over every living creature seeks young male to share fun times and maybe LTR. GSOH important, looks not. **Box 998**

RED haired devil with own dimension seeks shy elf for hot fun and games. **Box 666**

POWERFUL warlock, W/white hair and feminine hips, WLTm lady of any age who would understand. Likes dragon riding, destroying cities and world domination. **Box 559**

TROLLS SEEKING ORCS

GAY WITCH seeks like-minded witches for spell swapping and mischief. Likes hubble, bubble, toil and trouble. Has own broom and is willing to travel. **Box 285**

LONELY blue-haired girl, 8yrs old seeks hero to rescue her. Enjoys cooking, history and Moogles. **Tel No. (Madain Sari) 7389 6773**

PROFESSIONAL Angel seeks slim attractive demon to bring out the devil in her! Enjoys cake making, harp playing and pyromania. **Box 120**

CUDDLY Moogle, 2 yrs old, looking for open minded Chocobo for pleasant rides in the country. **Tel. No. 5356644**

CLOUD Young, confused teenager wants female to help discover past. Blonde hair, blue eyes, massive sword. **Tel. No. 2465323**

Final Fantasy IX is reviewed on page 24.

RESERVE ME VIDEOGAMER!

Greetings news person! Set aside

Video Gamer

issue five, yes?

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